

905.

imes a  
stay,  
inish-  
itive,  
them  
uws

high  
Dee,  
sque  
little  
Here  
minist  
great  
e has  
amon  
Mar  
mont  
shot  
each  
ablet  
gun,  
d be

apes  
oots,  
aret's

ly one  
orner,  
rath-

o the  
stag,  
rs are  
rs are  
orted  
head  
of the  
of the  
fectly

# COUNTRY LIFE

VOL. XVIII.—No. 452.

[REGISTERED AT THE  
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.]

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2nd. 1905.

[PRICE SIXPENCE,  
BY POST, 6½D]



MISS ALICE HUGHES,

LADY EILEEN ELLIOT.

52, Gower Street.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
<i>Our Portrait Illustration: Lady Eileen Elliot</i> ... ..	289
<i>East Anglia and Business</i> ... ..	290
<i>Country Notes</i> ... ..	291
<i>The Mistress of Le Bon. (Illustrated)</i> ... ..	293
<i>Country Life in Italy of the Renaissance. (Illustrated)</i> ... ..	298
<i>Tree Healing through the Bark</i> ... ..	300
<i>Bird-life of a Highland Loch</i> ... ..	302
<i>Alpine Perils. (Illustrated)</i> ... ..	302
<i>Country Home: Aston Hall. (Illustrated)</i> ... ..	306
<i>The Weasel</i> ... ..	316
<i>Wild Country Life</i> ... ..	317
<i>In the Garden. (Illustrated)</i> ... ..	317
<i>From the Farms</i> ... ..	318
<i>Lord Henry Bentinck's Wensleydales. (Illustrated)</i> ... ..	319
<i>A Book of the Week</i> ... ..	321
<i>Correspondence</i> ... ..	323

## EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to consider any MSS., photographs, or sketches submitted to him, but they should be accompanied with stamped addressed envelopes for return if unsuitable. In case of loss or injury he cannot hold himself responsible for MSS., photographs, or sketches, and publication in COUNTRY LIFE can alone be taken as evidence of acceptance. The name and address of the owner should be placed on the back of all pictures and MSS.

The charge for Small Estate Announcements is 12s. per inch per insertion, the minimum space being half an inch, approximately 48 words, for which the charge is 6s. per insertion. All Advertisements must be prepaid.

## EAST ANGLIA . . . . AND BUSINESS.

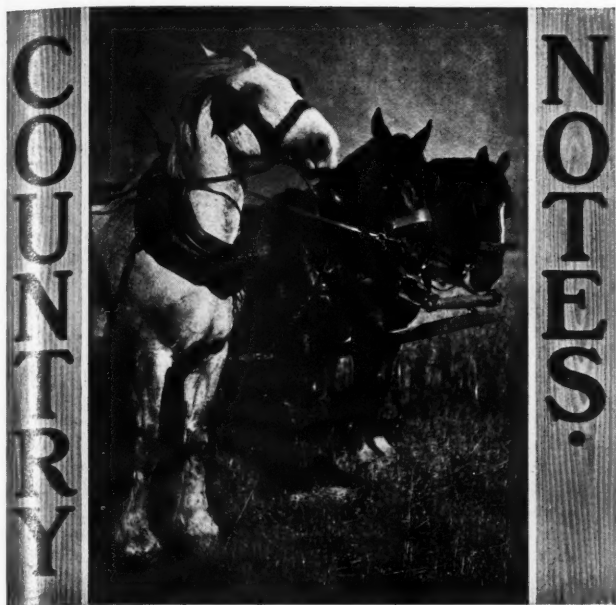
MUCH has been written of East Anglia by those who are devoted to the legendary and the picturesque, but seldom have we had a clearer exposition of the true facts relating to the prosperity of its people than was given before Lord Jersey's Commission by Mr. Walter Gardner. Our readers may or may not know that Mr. Gardner is the goods manager of the Great Eastern Railway Company, which practically has something approaching a monopoly of the carrying work of the district known generally as East Anglia, and he has during his long tenure of office consistently aimed at the development of the traffic of this part of the world. But we are afraid that the evidence which he tendered to Lord Jersey's Commission amounts, through no fault of his own, to a confession of failure. East Anglia has been well treated by the railway that serves it, but has made no adequate response, and perhaps if we are to understand the reason rightly we must cast a retrospective eye over the past agricultural history of this district. It has shown a curious mixture of prosperity and poverty. Norfolk has ever been almost as celebrated as Lincolnshire for its great farms, its good land, its skilled agriculturist, and the products that he sends to market. Suffolk, too, has shown the same combination, though we fear that during recent years its poverty has gained the upper hand. Generally speaking, East Anglia has been noted for good farming on the part of the tenants, and for a somewhat enfeebled class of labourers, who, after being ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clothed for centuries, have lost a great deal of the physical force which characterises their class in some other parts of the world. But in addition to what may be called its geographical fluctuations, East Anglia has changed its fortunes to a considerable extent in the period during which they have been studied. It was the first district in England to develop a real intellectual interest in agriculture, and to show the first signs of progress, though, strangely enough, in many important particulars it has now fallen considerably behind, and the agricultural people may at this day be seen pursuing methods that elsewhere have been obsolete for the last quarter of a century.

During the time when wheat reached its maximum price East Anglia flourished amazingly, that is to say, so far as the tenants and landlords were concerned. The wages of the labourers, according to statistics, remained at a very low level throughout. But when the depression of 1879 onwards came on, with all its frightful consequences, this wheat country was one of the first to suffer, and to suffer most profoundly. It must be said of the experiments that Mr. Gardner described before Lord Jersey's Commission, that it would not have been possible to attempt them at a less auspicious time. The inhabitants whose fortunes remained in the land have for long been thoroughly disheartened. In the years between 1870 and 1879 there were a very large number of persons in this neighbourhood who, having saved a certain amount of money, attempted to realise the ambition not uncommon among Englishmen, and bought little estates or farms in those prosperous times, believing, as they pathetically did, that the security of "Mr. Greenfield" was the best in the whole world. Disillusion came sad and forcibly, and in the early nineties many of these small properties changed hands at prices very little higher than the cost of the farm buildings upon them. That, roughly speaking, was the East Anglia Mr. Gardner and the Great Eastern Railway Company had to experiment upon. Since Tudor times the district has been renowned for its fat bees as well as its corn. This was taken into account when making the railway arrangements, and one of the experiments was to reduce the rates to 5s., 6s., and 7s. per ton; but unluckily the traffic for some time past has continued to fall off, and is now only between 6,000 and 7,000 tons a year. In answer to a question Mr. Gardner said he "attributed the falling off to the import of foreign meat, and he was afraid that no further reduction of rates would stop that falling off." It stands to reason that the gigantic and ever-increasing quantities of frozen and chilled meat which we obtain from abroad must affect the English grazier. It may be, and no doubt is, true that those who produce the very highest class of meat are above the competition, that the price of Scotch beef and Down mutton remains as good as ever. But when we come to that class of meat which, though not excellent, is still good, the competition of the Colonies and foreign countries becomes almost unbearable to the English farmer.

Mr. Gardner went on to say that they had reduced their rates for poultry in the same way as for meat, but that it had not increased the traffic. This is a curious commentary on the outburst of enthusiasm for poultry that was witnessed some five or six years ago. At the time we doubted if it would bear much fruit, and the result is that only from one place, Haverhill, is there any considerable supply of poultry sent to the London market. Mr. Gardner, in reply to another question, said that they had no particular care for the foreigner, but, on the contrary, preferred to encourage the local producer, because, in his own words, "We should get a bit of the extra money that he would have to spend, whereas the foreigner would spend it in his own country." He gave the interesting information that the Great Eastern district managers attend all the markets, and whenever any farmer asks for an exceptionally low rate, on the ground that he can cultivate a traffic, the matter is referred to the head office. But, alas, the result is that "our experience shows that there is no alteration that we can make in reducing our meat rates which would get back our English meat trade. I am afraid that has practically gone." In 1884 the meat traffic was about 15,000 tons, and now it is between 5,000 tons and 6,000 tons. Nor can explanation be given of this fact save that it is due to the import of foreign meat. Of course, this foreign meat is only to a comparatively small extent carried by the railways, or, at any rate, by the Great Eastern Railway. Very large quantities come direct into the Port of London. All this is very significant as coming from East Anglia, because no local consumption will account for the shrinkage of the traffic. The district is not a breeding one, but devoted rather to the fattening of cattle purchased from other places, particularly from Ireland. No doubt many of our readers are familiar with the scenes at King's Lynn when the contents of the cattle boats are disposed of to the farmers of Norfolk and Suffolk. However, we do not think that the pessimistic view is entirely justified. On the contrary, we appear to be on the eve of important changes in agriculture that afford every promise of effecting a revolution in the state of the farmer, and also, therefore, in the affairs of those who do his carrying for him. It may come slowly, but of its arrival it is scarcely possible to entertain a doubt.

## Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Eileen Elliot. Lady Eileen is the eldest daughter of the Earl of Minto, who has recently been appointed to succeed Lord Curzon as Viceroy and Governor-General of India.



AS we expected when writing last upon the subject, the negotiations at Portsmouth have ended in an agreement. On Tuesday afternoon the announcement was made somewhat dramatically that the Conference had arrived at complete accord upon all questions, and it had been decided to proceed to the elaboration of a Treaty of Peace. The result is largely due to the magnanimity of Japan, and the diplomatic dexterity of M. Witte, who retires from the Conference covered with laurels. The Russians have shown themselves more successful in the field of diplomacy than they were in the field of arms, and have induced Japan to yield on the essential points. There is to be no indemnity, no territorial cession, no seizure of interned ships, and yet the result will be hailed with delight by all lovers of humanity. Even though she has surrendered on these points, Japan emerges from the quarrel a gainer in many ways—first of all in status and prestige. She has most effectually checked the ambitions of Russia in the Far East, and has given assurance to the world that there will be very little conflict there during the next two or three generations. She has also obtained Port Arthur and a predominant position in China. These were results worth fighting for.

The most important point in the preliminary agricultural returns, to which reference is made in another column, is the immense growth of the wheat area, amounting to nearly half a million acres, as compared with last year, and the total amount of ground under wheat in 1905 is the largest of the century. We seem, therefore, to have made a new departure, comparable in importance with that which took place when wheat began to go out of cultivation. The increase is of even greater extent, and the circumstance helps to prove, what has often been contended in these columns, that the cheapness of wheat was a purely temporary phenomenon, due to easily-explainable causes, that the glut is now well-nigh exhausted, and that, consequently, in spite of temporary changes, the permanent tendency is for wheat to increase in value, while the cost of production is somewhat lessening. There is every reason to believe in the continuation of the process, and that now, having taken the right turn, the wheat area will continue to extend until it reaches its previous proportions.

That West London should have another market for the sale of fruit and vegetables is most desirable from the point of view of the cultivator. Those who send their goods to Paddington Station find it rather hard to pay carriage thence to Covent Garden, because the expenses connected with marketing fruit are already much too heavy. The grower who sends his stuff up to Covent Garden Market has first of all the cost of carriage, and in the second place there is the auctioneer's account, and after all the price realised is invariably a very low one as compared with that asked by the retail dealers; so that in the country nearly every market gardener who knows what he is doing tries his best to dispose of his goods locally before attempting to send them up to London. In the end this must be detrimental to the city dweller, and the formation of a new market ought to have an excellent effect in facilitating the sale of fruit and vegetables there.

Travelling over the length and breadth of England, whether by rail or motor, one is pleased to find grounds for thinking that the æsthetic sense of the nation in regard to the construction of

its "villa residences" is far more alive and critical than was the case a few years back. Here and there, of course, one does see monstrosities of architecture that are an outrage on a beautiful country; but the small house, of simple, inoffensive lines, and of good proportion, seems to be becoming much more the rule and less the exception than it used to be. It is impossible to doubt that we owe a great deal to some of our younger and more artistic architects for this general improvement of taste in bricks and mortar; but, at the same time, it is fairly certain that there is a progressive improvement of taste also in the dwellers in these houses generally. The absolute lack of taste with which the early Victorian period seems so firmly and unfortunately associated, is ceasing to be a national characteristic, and we have real ground for congratulating ourselves that this salutary change had made some progress by the time that it became the fashion to dot villas on all the hilltops and slopes in the neighbourhood of London, until the suburban area threatens to extend itself "from the centre to the sea."

## REFLECTION.

Our summer leaves us, dear my dear!

What will its best thought be?

A line of light in a sullen year?

The old romance, illusive, near,

Fading wistfully?

Or will you dream its dream with me?

Its dream of haunting songs,

Delighting skies, and laughter free;

And, O, the heart's tired ecstasy

That to love belongs!

LILIAN STREET.

The visit of the British Fleet to the Baltic has not produced anything comparable to the *entente cordiale* that found such notable expression at Portsmouth; but, nevertheless, the Germans after some preliminary grumbling have come not only to welcome, but to enjoy the visit. The excursion trains to Swinemünde have been crowded, and the townspeople, though they did not attempt to rival the magnificence of the reception at Brest and Portsmouth, have shown a cordial hospitality that will be much appreciated in Great Britain. What the Kaiser meant by despatching the German Fleet to take part in the show is not quite apparent. It seems to be the result, in some measure, of his innate love of theatricality; but the show which it made was not very imposing beside that of the British ships. However, we in this country have no wish to heighten the ill-feeling which exists on the part of at least a portion of the Germans and this nation. The disposition, on the contrary, is to welcome any manifestation of goodwill such as we have seen at Swinemünde.

In *The Times* correspondence on "National Deterioration," a curious bye-issue has been raised by Professor Karl Pearson, who refers to the infertility of what he calls the intellectual classes. But it has been asked very pertinently, "What does he mean by this phrase?" He can scarcely refer to those who have inherited wealth only, since as a rule they do not take much trouble to display what intellect they have, except it may be as legislators in the House of Commons, diplomats abroad, and Governors of Colonies. But we have it on the authority of one of the most conspicuous of these, the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone, that the work of the statesman or politician is ephemeral beside that of the poet or man of letters. If we judge of the amusements of the people, it will not be possible to arrive at a very definite conclusion. To go to horse-races, and to be expert at yachting and motoring are no doubt pleasant accomplishments, but we question if they require more brain power than is needed to play quoits, to breed and fly pigeons, or any of the other democratic amusements.

If we look around at the fruits of intellect we find that many of them are due to what Professor Karl Pearson would call the unintellectual classes. The vast system of English railways is due to the son of a poor peasant who began work when he was six years of age, and picked up what little knowledge he had in a right school; the most strenuous philosopher of the nineteenth century—a man who, perhaps, yielded more intellectual influence than any other man in Europe—was not only the son of a peasant, but, despite the prosperity of his later years, remained in all essentials himself a peasant to the end; the most exquisite lyric poetry in our language was written by a peasant who came of peasant stock and who died in the utmost poverty; the most promising poet of last century—the beautiful Adonais himself—lived, as a *Quarterly* reviewer once pointed out, a great part of his life among galley-boys. One of the most famous social reformers of the early part of the nineteenth century, whose name is now a household word, was also of the poorest peasant stock. It would be just as reasonable, therefore, to take out one class as intellectual and another



as unintellectual, as it would be to say that aristocratic bridge, as an exercise of brain power, is superior to democratic draughts. But Professor Karl Pearson has been applying a quantity test, and finds that the brains of clever people are as a rule greater in quantity than the brains of those who are not clever. We are afraid, however, that here he is only proceeding from fallacy to fallacy. It has been proved over and over again that effective brain power depends quite as much on physical energy as on the size of the brain. The most magnificent machinery is useless when it lacks driving power.

The Proceedings of the Zoological Society for August contains an interesting account by Dr. Albert Gray of his researches on the membranous labyrinth of the ear of a number of animals belonging to widely-different groups. Anatomically this is a useful piece of work, but the deductions which the author draws therefrom are, to say the least, curious. From the anatomical point of view it is interesting to notice that man and the sturgeon apparently enjoy the unique distinction of possessing an accessory ampulla to this labyrinth, the use of which is at present unknown. It is probably of no great value, inasmuch as, so far as man is concerned, only about four out of six individuals are so provided. The function of this organ—which is a part of the organ of hearing lying within the head, and takes the form of three tube-shaped coils, one directed upwards, one outwards, and one downwards—it has been proved, is to control the orientation of the body, as is shown by the fact that when this labyrinth is destroyed the animal is no longer able to maintain its body in its normal attitude during locomotion. Thus the removal of the organ in the human subject destroys the power of keeping the body in an erect position; fishes float upside down if it suffers injury.

But the author has added a new function to this work of orientation. From the fact that the semi-circular canals of the seal are remarkable for their great size, and are further provided with otoliths or "ear bones" resembling those of fishes, he has come to the conclusion that they are the guiding forces in the migrations which these animals make; and finding similar otoliths in the ears of birds—which discovery requires confirmation—he infers that avian migrations are similarly controlled. "Almost all birds migrate," says the author, "a great many fishes, and even some mammals, such as the seal. That they cannot guide themselves by the sense of sight entirely is obvious, since they may pursue their flight undeterred by the darkest night and through blinding fog. Furthermore, it is difficult to understand how fishes and seals can obtain much information by vision; and, indeed, it is clear that some other sense must be employed, though vision may undoubtedly help. The same difficulty occurs in the case of the corn-crake, which appears to do its migration on foot (!), and vision can hardly avail it very much on its journey!!" The extraordinary power of migration with which the corn-crake is credited will astonish ornithologists without question, and we suspect that physiologists will be no less taken aback at the new rôle assigned to the membranous labyrinth. This little collection of otoliths in the ear, then, is supposed by the author to be the talisman by which "cats and dogs find their way home from any distances," and by this same means the homing pigeon is supposed to be guided. There have been many hypotheses on the matter of migration, but this last seems the least satisfactory of any.

The idea of winter week-ends for second and third class travellers, which has been started by a newspaper correspondent, is well worthy of attention. There are many people whose life is a fevered one during the week who would be much the better for a day or two at one of our seaside resorts. The correspondent shows conclusively that he might have this for the sum of one guinea, including a small amount for tips, if the railway companies would care to issue the necessary coupons. As the matter stands, the first-class passenger may have his week-end for two guineas, and why the poorer one should not have his for one is not at all evident. The meals sketched out by the correspondent are such as ought to satisfy any reasonable man, including as they do dinner on Saturday night for half-a-crown, breakfast on Sunday morning and Monday morning for eighteen-pence each, lunch on Sunday for half-a-crown, and dinner on Sunday for half-a-crown. The bedroom ought to cost about half-a-crown each night, that is to say, five shillings. One would think that the railway companies would be very glad to arrange this, as it would cause a decided increase of their traffic, while the terms ought surely to be extremely acceptable to boarding-houses which do no business during the winter, and in many cases are partially closed. The scheme is calculated to benefit all who are concerned.

The end of the contest for the County Championship in cricket is that the honour goes to Yorkshire, and the result gives universal satisfaction. In the first place, the Northern team have shown themselves most expert in all departments of the game, and

play it in the spirit of true sportsmen, fighting out what seemed to be their losing battles inch by inch, but taking bold measures to secure victory whenever it seemed to be within their grasp—brilliant at one time, thoroughly patient at another. In the second place, the Yorkshire Eleven has the distinction of being pre-eminently a county one. It is recruited from time to time from the local clubs of the various Ridings, and no encouragement is given to those players who "qualify" for one club after another, thus deepening the spirit of gladiatorial professionalism that threatens the true interests of cricket.

The outcome of the Chess Tournament at Southport is that Mr. Atkins is established as the champion of Great Britain—a very great honour to him, seeing that among the competitors was one so formidable as Mr. Blackburne still remains even in his advancing years. Mr. Atkins thoroughly deserves the position, although it is only fair to say that there are players who did not enter the lists who yet, from what we can judge of their previous performances, might have been expected to hold their own fairly well with him. However, having won his spurs, he is entitled to wear them until a challenger appears. In the meantime, it is satisfactory to find that the organisation for carrying out the championship contests is, as it were, solidified year by year, and, no doubt, will attract increased interest as time goes on. If we may judge from the increase in the number of chess clubs, and in the number of the members who join them, it is a safe conclusion that this pastime is day by day growing more popular. As Mr. Atkins himself says, city men, wearied with business, find in it at once the most innocent and the most complete distraction from their ordinary cares.

#### THE UNWRITTEN SONG.

Now where's a song for our small dear  
With her quaint voice and her quick ear  
To sing—for gnats and bats to hear—  
At twilight in her bed?

A song of tiny elfin things,  
With shimmering, silky, silvery wings,  
Footing it in fairy rings,  
And kissing overhead

A song of starry glow-worm lights  
In the long grass of shadowy nights,  
And flitting showers of firefly lights,  
Where summer woods hang deep,  
Of hearing noiseless owls that find  
Their way at dark, and of a kind,  
And drowsy, drowsy, ocean wind  
That puts the sea to sleep.

But where's the song for our small dear  
With her quaint voice and her quick ear  
To sing—for dreamland things to hear—  
And hush herself to sleep?

FORD MADDOX HUEFFER.

The letter which Lord Durham's agent read at the recent luncheon of the Chester-le-Street Agricultural Show is one that should be noted by all bodies which are in the habit of obtaining the loan of private parks for the purposes of shows or outings. The letter was to the effect that in consequence of the disfigurement of the park and injury done to the trees by the wanton carelessness or mischief of picknickers and pleasure-seekers of various kinds, his lordship would be compelled to close the park to these people for the future. The letter added that Lord Durham would make an exception to the general rule thus enunciated in the case of the Chester-le-Street Farmers' Club, many of the members of which had been associated with the Lambton family as tenants for many years. The public will do well to accept this object-lesson from Lambton Park as a warning of what is likely to happen elsewhere if they will not show reasonable care in their use of places of beauty which the kindness of the owners throw open to them.

A curious point has arisen out of the temporary detention of a French fishing-boat, for fishing, as was alleged, within the three-mile limit off the South Coast of Devon. The point on which the question of transgression turned was whether the Eddystone is to be regarded as an island in the technical sense for the purposes of the international agreement. From the definition given by the geography books the rock is certainly an island, for it is land entirely surrounded by water, and it is, moreover, an inhabited island, for there are the three lighthouse-keepers constantly in residence. But though it is thus an island according to the letter, it is very doubtful whether such a mere rock was contemplated as falling within the scope of "island" as mentioned in the text of the agreement. If this were to be so, why should not also the Stepping Stones, between Scilly and the mainland, be rated as islands, as well as the Bishop and Wolf lighthouses and all the others? For the moment the question is at rest in consequence of the French fishing-boat's release.



## THE MISTRESS OF LE BON.

JACQUES LE VIEUX died about three days before the month of harvest, and the important farm of Le Bon passed into other hands. The question of the inheritance aroused eager interest and speculation in the village of St. Martin and its scattered surroundings. For generations the small farms and cottages of the country-side had passed in direct descent from father to son; but Jacques le Vieux, as he had been called for the last thirty years or more, had lost his only child, an infant of a few months, of a fever so long ago that its birth and death were mere matters of history, and now a great-nephew was to come from a distance to take possession. Père Lasserre had written to the address given by Jacques, when dying, to tell the heir, Marc Clément, that he was to come with all speed to take his uncle's last instructions respecting the farm. But either the old man had been indistinct or Père Lasserre had written the address badly, for the letter was delayed, and it was a full fortnight after Jacques le Vieux's death that a tall youth of some twenty years had walked into the yard of Le Bon, startling Mère Anger as she fed the chickens with the abrupt question: "Hein. Is this my farm of Le Bon?"

For answer Mère Anger dropped the pan of corn with the exclamation: "Mon Dieu! My farm, Monsieur, did you say?"

"Yes, Madame, my farm of Le Bon," was the answer. "I have walked fifty miles to see my uncle, and was told at Bécé that Jacques le Vieux was dead, and that one Marc Clément had inherited the farm," and he added simply, "I am Marc Clément."

In a moment Mère Anger had gathered her scattered thoughts together, and hastily led the way to the door of the farmhouse, which, as is the custom with the dwellings of these simple people, gave straight out on the cowyard. Mère Anger's tongue was kept hard at work as she explained that since the death of Jacques le Vieux Père Lasserre and Monsieur le Notaire had given the farm into her charge, and that she and her four daughters were working hard at the harvest. They lived close by, and, indeed, had always worked on the farm of Le Bon, and she hoped that Monsieur would still be able to employ them. "For better workers than Jeanne, Suzanne, Marie, and Anna 'twould be impossible to find," she ended, in comprehensive commendation. All this Marc Clément received in silence, as he stood in the kitchen surveying his newly-acquired property. At length, as Mère Anger stopped for breath, he said, "Merci, Madame, I will go over the farm alone."

This was somewhat of a blow to Mère Anger, but she was comforted with the thought of the news that she had for her daughters, and with a final instruction as to where Marc Clément would find milk, bread, and butter, she hastened off, armed with her sickle, to the fields, where her girls were already working. She was breathless with her hurry, and for the moment could not have bent herself to cut the corn, even had she been of a mind to do so, as she reached Jeanne and Suzanne, who were felling the golden stalks with sickles identical in form with hers. "My daughters," she gasped at length, "the bon Dieu has sent him at last; he is young, straight, and tall."

There was not an instant's doubt in the girls' minds whom their mother meant, and a torrent of questions was poured out

upon her by the daughters as they noted with amused faces the excitement of the mother who was usually so calm. Before long she had told them the whole story of Marc Clément's sudden appearance, and of all she had said to him; but of what he had said to her, which, after all, the girls would have found more interesting, there was little to recount, for he had said so little. Still, he had certainly arrived, and he was young, and with that she gave a sigh of satisfaction, for where could stronger, handsomer, or better girls be found than her own four, and surely one of them should reign as Marc Clément's bride at Le Bon? It would be no more than natural. Marie and Anna had yet to be told, for they were in another field, and after that Mère Anger bustled off to her friend and crony, Venne Labat, to spread the news. Marie and Anna found themselves tired with their work in the hot sun when their mother left them. They were young, and not so seasoned as Jeanne and Suzanne, possibly not quite so persevering, and the interruption was very welcome. Anna knelt beside the newly-cut corn, and for the most part listened whilst Marie stood and talked. They were fully alive to the importance of Marc Clément's arrival in its possible connection with their own future prospects, for had they not often discussed the probability of his marrying one or other of them. What would be more natural and sensible? They had been born and bred on the farm, whilst he was a foreigner from fifty miles away, and, as Marie remarked, they could teach him how the farm had always been kept, how the dun cow, who was so cross, had to be



M. Emil Frechon.

MARIE AND ANNA.

Copyright.

stroked before you milked her, and so on. There was but little jealousy in their simple breasts. The lucky one chosen would be sure to see that the mother and sisters remained undisturbed in their cottage, and that sundry benefits fell to their share. Perhaps, however, Anna, the youngest of them all, had brighter hopes than the others. She was regarded as the beauty of the family, although in their workaday world beauty was not greatly considered; and as she walked home that evening, she stood for some time, lingering behind the rest, holding her untied kerchief round her head, with a pensive look, into which some prospect of proprietorship entered, over the harvest fields of *Le Bon*. She felt there could be no higher ambition than to be mistress of so fair a farm.

That night they saw nothing of Marc Clément. He had gone to visit *Père Lasserre*, and had met *Mère Anger* in the village. He had thanked her for the care she had taken of the farm, and said that he hoped to see her in the morning, before leaving for two days on business. He seemed a young man of but few words, and struck the voluble *Mère Anger* as serious

Anna, "perhaps *Mademoiselle* will help in the house?" Anna was speechless at thus being singled out from all the rest, but not so her mother, who would have been profuse and voluble in her thanks had not Marc Clément stopped them by abruptly taking leave of the company.

All that day, as they wound the corn into sheaves, they talked of the one important topic. They had all been struck by the significant way in which Marc Clément had turned at once to Anna. She it was, too, who had opened the door to him; and this seemed clearly to indicate that Anna was to be his choice. Although she was the youngest, there were no heart-burnings. She was the pet, "*la petite*," and the elder girls knew of other suitors for their own hands, suitors certainly less desirable, but still neighbours whom they had known from childhood, and so far, preferable to foreigners.

Anna smiled to herself as she deftly tied the straw round the sheaves with the help of the wooden stave, and Jeanne called to her: "*Petite*, wilt thou give our mother the speckled cat or the brown?"



M. Emil Frechon.

BINDING THE SHEAVES.

Copyright.

beyond his years and of a somewhat sad countenance; but *Venne Labat* explained this as being no more than natural after acquiring such sudden wealth. Doubtless the weight of it oppressed him.

Although the family of *Mère Anger* were early risers, Marc Clément was at the door before they were all up, and it was Anna who opened it and asked him to come in and have some coffee with them. He thanked her, entered the cottage, and sat down at their table "as if he was one of themselves," as *Mère Anger* afterwards described it. He nodded gravely to each daughter in turn as she appeared, but addressed no remark to them, only asking the mother a few questions as to the stock and harvest. All these *Mère Anger* answered at length, telling him how far they were advanced, and that in a few days all would be ready to carry. He again told her he would be away but two days, and on the third would take part in loading the corn, "with your help, Madame, and your daughters', be it understood," he ended courteously. *Mère Anger* thought this a good opportunity for asking whether he intended to employ her daughters as before. He replied at once that he hoped they would continue to work on the farm as in his uncle's time. "And," he added, turning to

"Hush, Jeanne," Anna replied; "someone will hear you, and 'tis far from settled yet." At this the sisters laughed, and continued to plan the future for Anna and *Le Bon*, hardly taking into account at all the necessary Marc Clément. All agreed that he was tall and brown and silent, but that he would make a good husband was not questioned.

*Mère Anger* for these two days was too busy to join her daughters. She turned the farmhouse inside out, and with the help of *Venne Labat* rearranged it according to her taste, and it was with feelings of immense satisfaction that she locked the door on the evening of the second day and hid the key under a stone, according to previous arrangement with Marc Clément.

There was much frolic and laughter that night during supper at the home of *Mère Anger*, for was not the morrow the day on which Marc Clément would return, and had he not said that he would carry the harvest with their help? Sundry omens had been noticed during the day. Anna's sheaves had seemed to tie themselves with a deft ease that was almost more than natural, and had stood up far better than those of her sisters, like the sheaves of Joseph of old. Unconsciously she had sung low songs of love and hymns of thanksgiving as she worked, while the





Copyright.

MERE ANGER, JEANNE, AND SUZANNE.

M. Emil Frachon.



elders listened to her with almost awestruck wonder, for as a rule Anna was the quiet and reserved one of the family. It was only at night, as she knelt in prayer, that their joy and hope received a check. Anna was kneeling with her head low bowed upon her hands in the moonlight, when suddenly they noticed a cloud pass across the moon, and Anna was thrown into shadow. To them it seemed an omen of the darkening of her future, and the sombre incident caused the sisters to cease their raillery and to cross themselves in silence.

The next day was one of disappointment. Throughout its hours they worked in the fields, expecting to see Marc Clément at every moment; but he did not come, and they returned home in subdued spirits, which contrasted sharply with their demeanour

of the evening before, and Anna became her old quiet self again.

The morning of the third day dawned bright and fair, and Mère Anger decided on going directly to Le Bon. She told her daughters that as the harvest was ready they had better bestir themselves in their own patch of garden, and await Marc Clément's return, for after his promise they dared not commence the carrying without him. She walked in some doubt and agitation to the farm, and as she approached she noticed a faint smoke issuing from one of its chimneys. At the sight she quickened her pace and hurried to the door. It was locked. She looked under the stone for the key; it was not there. For a minute she was puzzled, and then realised that Marc Clément



M. Emil Frechon.

IN PENSIVE MOOD.

Copyright



M. Emil Frechon.

## THE MISTRESS OF LE BON.

Copyright.

must have returned, and had probably started for the fields, taking the key with him. As she stood irresolute at the door she was startled by a low noise inside the house; a murmur as of a bird twittering, and then another murmur as of music, low music, certainly, but very sweet, and then silence reigned. Puzzled yet more, she peeped through the window, but could see nothing, and finally decided that she would go at once in search of Marc Clément.

It was some little time before Mère Anger, whose pace was not swift, reached the field. As she came near it she saw that the farm-cart and horse were already there, and felt a little hurt, on her own account and on her daughters', that Marc Clément had started the carrying without them. Suddenly, to her surprise, she saw him get up into the cart, where another figure, a female helper, handed up to him, on the pitchfork, sheaf after sheaf.

Surely it must be one of her daughters that he had been to fetch—Anna, no doubt! But no, Anna had no dress of that colour, and the kerchief about the head—it was quite different from hers! With a sudden dread at her heart, Mère Anger hastened her steps till she came close to the workers. Marc Clément's assistant was a stranger, a woman with a different look in her eyes from that of any of her girls. They all had merry, happy faces, albeit bronzed with the sun and wind. This face was that of a woman who had known sorrow, and who had done much hard work.

Marc Clément, with his hat well over his eyes, continued to arrange the sheaves, unaware of Mère Anger's approach, until she was close beside the cart. Then he said, "Good morning, Madame. As you see, I have returned."

He said no word in explanation of the woman, who stopped working and gravely smiled a greeting.

"Good morning, Monsieur," said Mère Anger.

The next moment, her curiosity getting the better of her, she asked, "But who?"—and then she stopped.

"This is my wife, Madame Anger," Marc Clément replied, understanding the question; and the woman, on that informal introduction, advanced and held out her hand. Mère Anger staggered, and barely recovered sufficiently to take the offered hand. Then her emotions completely mastered her; and she

burst into tears. Sitting beside her sympathetically amongst the corn, Mme. Clément tried to elicit the cause of her woe, but Mère Anger continued to sob, and every now and then said, "Poor Anna! Poor little one!"

At that, Mme. Clément looked frightened, and said to her husband, "Doubtless Madame has been to the farm. Perhaps some evil has befallen our little one. I should not have left her alone so long."

And she rose to go back. But this brought Mère Anger to herself again, and she ceased crying, and began to make excuses for herself.

"It was the heat, she had hurried, and she had been mistaken," and, in fact, gave all sorts of incomprehensible reasons for her tears. The thought that there was a little one aroused her maternal feelings, and she poured out questions which Mme. Clément answered as quickly as she could.

"Yes, she had come the night before from Béché, where Marc had left them four days ago with a relation, while he had gone on to see if such wondrous news could be true that they had been left a property. They, so poor and hard-working! They had never dreamt of such riches until that marvellous letter from Père Lasserre had come, telling them of the old uncle's illness, the great uncle whom Marc had never seen. They had not been married two years, although they had loved each other far longer, for both were very poor, and she was older than Marc; but they had a baby—oh, such an angel!—but her they had left at the farm asleep, whilst they had gone out at dawn, unable for their own part to sleep any longer. They had been obliged to start work if only to quiet their excitement."

The two women talked and talked, and all the while Marc Clément worked quietly beside them.

"He is a hard worker, my husband," Mme. Clément said, when they had a little pause in which to consider him. "He has had hard times, but now, God be thanked, all is well."

Ah yes, all was well for them, as Mère Anger realised, but what of her daughter's woe, her little Anna? She must go back and tell her, as gently as might be, that all her dreams had faded, and it was with a heavy heart that poor Mère Anger retraced her footsteps home.



## COUNTRY LIFE IN ITALY OF THE RENAISSANCE.

THE frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli in the Riccardi Palace, and also those in the Campo Santo of Pisa, bring vividly before us another phase of country life, that of travel in the days of the Renaissance. As we watch the long cavalcade which winds round the steep mountain path, we are carried back to the time when wheeled carriages were almost unknown, for, indeed, there were but few roads on which they would have been possible. The only highway between one city and another was often little more than a rough bridle-path, a quagmire of mud in winter, and, passing through a tangled thicket here and there, a hiding-place for outlaws and wild beasts.



THE WINE-PRESS.

There was no choice but to ride on horseback, save on state occasions, when a great lady might be carried on a litter well padded with feather mattresses covered with crimson satin. All goods of every kind were conveyed on the backs of horses or baggage mules, as we see in the procession of the Magi, where Gozzoli, in concession to Eastern tastes, has also brought in camels. We have many accounts of travel in those days, for a journey was a serious matter, not to be lightly undertaken or easily forgotten. Thus, when the Duchess Beatrice of Milan went on a diplomatic mission to Venice, and wished to make a good impression on the Senate, we are told that she had fifty mules in her train, laden with her costly dresses. Of another Princess, Bianca Sforza, on her way to marry the Emperor Maximilian, we have a pitiful account of her journey, from the

pen of her secretary. She started from Milan at the end of November, to be nearly shipwrecked in a sudden storm on the Lake of Como; then, with endless hardships of tempestuous, wintry weather, she rode across that "fearful cruel mountain" the Stelvio Pass, one hapless lady-in-waiting having to be left behind at Gravedona! Not until Christmas Eve did Bianca at last reach Innsbruck.

Again, we have the famous journey of Lucretia Borgia across Italy, from Rome to Ferrara, with an immense retinue of nearly 1,000 persons, which took twenty-five days in the depth of winter. If we had chanced to meet them on the way—with their splendid dresses and gaudily-caparisoned horses, with dwarfs and jesters to beguile the way, and a company of trumpeters, drums, and flute-boys to make martial music—we might have mistaken it for a travelling circus thus noisily parading through the land.

If with "bad roads and bad hostels," disasters and mishaps, and perils by sea and land, travel was by no means a certain joy, at least the gardens of old Italy must have been delightful. Their outline appears to have been on somewhat formal lines, of which the Italian Garden of Hampton Court is an instance; and in the backgrounds of Benozzo Gozzoli we often see "alley nod to alley," and the trees cut in fantastic shapes, looking exactly like those in a child's box of Dutch toys! Lorenzo dei Medici delighted in his botanic garden at the villa of Careggi, which was filled with Oriental exotics. In this beautiful place his mother, Madonna Lucretia, spent much of her time, and she was evidently noted for her choice fruit, as we find her little grandson Piero writing to her: "Send us some more ripe figs, I mean those very ripe ones, and send us some peaches with their kernels, and other of those things which you know we like."

The neighbourhood of Florence has ever been famous for beautiful gardens, and we read about plantations of mulberry, of orange and lemon trees, of myrtle and cistus, with fountains and even artificial lakes, the whole encircled by groves of cypress and avenues of plane trees. Amongst other joys of country life the children of Lorenzo had their dogs and horses. Piero writes to his father from the villa of Cafaggiolo: "I wish that you would send me some of the best setters that there are . . ." and later, in another letter, he says: "I have not yet had the little horse you promised me, although to

give a tone to my letters I have always written them in Latin. . . ." But the pony arrives at last, and gives great satisfaction.

Amongst the garden flowers we find a great many plants grown for medicinal purposes, such as poppy, mustard, wormwood, lichen, peppermint, hops, rue, privet, marjoram, crocus, also roses and violets, which rejoiced the eye and served a double purpose; camomile, mallow, and other herbs for making the "tisanes," which French people still use so much. But if country life had many delights, it also had its drawbacks in winter, then as now. Some most interesting letters are preserved from the tutor of Lorenzo's children, which he wrote from the villa of Cafaggiolo, where he was imprisoned by bad weather in the long dull winter of 1478, in the midst of the cold Mugello.





THE VINTAGE OF NOAH.

"The only news I can send you is that we have here such continual rains that it is impossible to quit the house, and the exercises of the country are changed for childish sports within doors. Here I stand by the fireside, in my great-coat and slippers, that you might take me for the very figure of Melancholy. . . .

I, for my part, am half dead with solitude and weariness. . . ." We all know the sad result of this dullness, in the final breach between the Lady Clarice, the wife of Lorenzo, and the tutor Poliziano.

These country houses were always surrounded by a farm, of which the vineyards were usually the most important portion. In the Campo Santo of Pisa we have the most marvellous pictures of the vintage of Noah, which that fascinating painter, Benozzo Gozzoli,



A RICH HARVEST.

copied from life scenes in his own country home in Tuscany. He has so keen a feeling for Nature that the whole story is alive before our eyes. We see the vines trained on a pergola, luxuriant in foliage and fruit; the stalwart labourers have climbed on ladders to reach the fruit, and bend down to pile the rich bunches into the baskets which the women hold with upraised arms below. The central figure is Juno-like in her splendid contours—massive strength combined with the most delicately-formed hands and feet. Much the same in point of development may be said of the young athlete who stands on the massive vat, and treads out the grapes in the wine-press. The face and figure of the young woman who empties her basket of grapes into the vat are of the type of beauty

most admired in those days, and the fine embroidery round the dress and the hem of her skirt might point her out as being of higher rank, although she too is bare-footed. Her high forehead, clearly-cut features, and fair hair elaborately braided, are specially worthy of attention. At her feet is the ubiquitous dog with a menace for the two small children, who, with quaint birds, reptiles, and flowers, fill up the foreground of these fantastic pictures.

There is another delightful country scene in the background of the *Magi* of the Riccardi Palace. An old shepherd, clad in his hooded coat of fustian, stands cross-legged leaning upon his staff to rest a while from his labours, while his white sheepdog, of the famous Apennine breed, awaits the word of command. Meanwhile his "fleece charge" of slender Archaic proportions—but little improved since the days of Virgil's *Pastorals*—is scattered around, engaged in browsing a most unprofitable pasture, or "sipping the morning dew upon the mountain's brow." His comrade, a picturesque dreamy youth, is evidently a love-lorn swain who has forgotten the very existence of his flock. The two herdsmen below in the picture seem to have caught the contemplative mood of the ox and ass which they tend.

These vine dressers and hinds recall to us another aspect of country life in the Middle Ages. Hitherto we have been chiefly concerned with the doings of great lords and nobles, who in all ages have contrived to make life endurable. But with the great

mass of the people the case is otherwise. In those bygone days of feudal rule, the dwellers in the country were almost invariably serfs, bound to the estate on which they were born, and under the absolute rule of the owner. They were possibly better fed than at the present day, for butter, cheese, and eggs were plentiful; and their fertile soil of Italy supplied them with abundance of fruit and vegetables. In a poor man's garden we find strawberries, raspberries, cherries; and he grows leeks, onions, peas, beans, spinach, beetroot, turnips, carrots, rhubarb, and fennel; while he esteems the use of nettles, and boils violet leaves like spinach. He holds his plot of ground by the tenure of so many days in the year of service to his lord.

But in sickness or old age his case is pitiable indeed, and we have a curious proof of this in a letter written in 1455 by the mother of Filippo Strozzi, at Florence. She is speaking of some old people on her estate in the country: "Piero and Monna Cilia are both alive and infirm. I have overflowed the field for next year, and as I must put it in order, these two old people, if they do not die, must go and beg. Heaven will provide." This is no passing thought of the good lady who was pious and highly esteemed—a friend of the Medici; but it is a firm resolution in her own mind. A few months later she writes to her son: "Piero is still alive, so he must put up with it and go away and beg. It would be best, of course, if Heaven will take him." Apparently a merciful Providence had already provided for Monna Cilia!

CHRISTOPHER HARE.

## TREE HEALING THROUGH THE BARK.

IN the world of fruit cultivation much interest has of late years been awakened by the theory that diseased trees can be cured and made quite healthy by the introduction of certain chemicals through the bark above ground, and that, further, they can be rid of their grubs, or other insects that occasion so much breaking of heart both amongst growers for profit and amateurs, by the same simple process. In Russia, particularly, the idea has taken a good hold, and Mr. Mokrgetski, the well-known Russian entomologist, has during the past few years carried out a series of experiments over a wide field, and on a very large number of trees, which enables him to speak with some confidence of the above-ground system of tree healing. He has experimented, as stated, on a variety of trees, some 500 in all, under a variety of local conditions and with about thirty different combinations of chemicals. The effect on each unit was carefully observed and recorded, and photographs taken. It should be stated here that, whereas previous notices on this subject have been confined to theories, Mr. A. S. Mokrgetski deals with a coherent series of results of actual experiments of trees healed, and improvement in their growth and development—all obviously due to the introduction of salts through the bark, well above ground, and without any artificial aid from the roots. And he claims that he is the first to have systematically and conclusively demonstrated the value of the new method.



TWO PASTORAL PANELS.

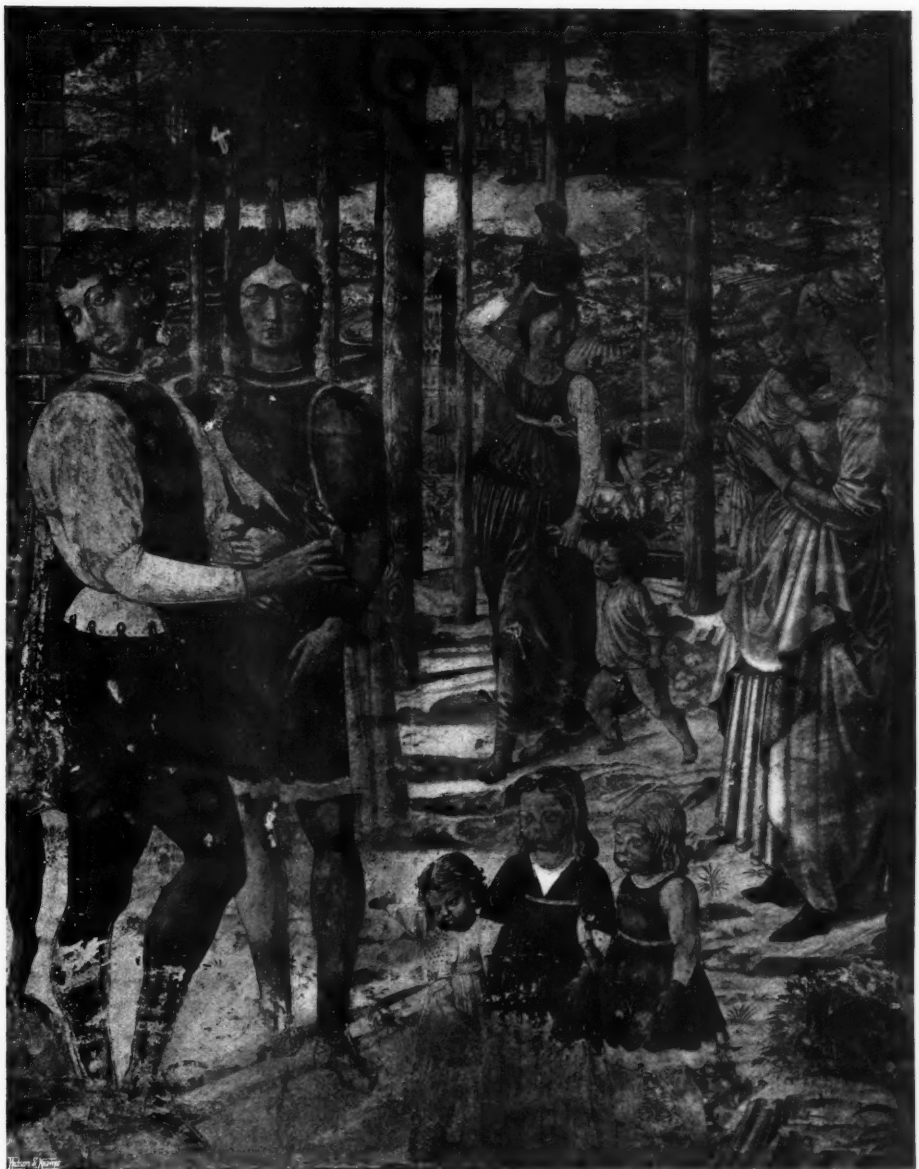


The experiments made on forest trees may claim first mention. In the district of the Dnieper, in the Phalts Feina Park, many oak, poplar, and plane trees had suffered severely from frost, which was shown by their dry branches and yellowed, poorly-revived leaves. A quantity of nutritive salt was introduced into the trunks of the sick trees. In a short time all the trees subjected to this treatment straightened out, their leaves freshened, they made many strong shoots, and developed a thick foliage, whilst the other sick trees, not so treated, continued languid and developed very slowly. In this manner eighteen trees were cured and remained healthy far into the autumn, outstripping in vigour and luxuriance of growth even those trees that had not suffered from the frost at all.

Not less satisfactory were the results of trials made on locust trees. Twenty of these, in poor condition, yellow and dry, were treated with twelve to twenty-four grammes of nutritive salt alternately with ferrous sulphate, and for the purpose of comparison a number were left without such treatment. In a few months all the trees treated with salt and iron straightened out, the green of the leaves freshened, and the general growth quickened, whilst those not so treated continued to pine. Towards the autumn the cured trees made many shoots in the crown which far surpassed in magnificence those of the untreated trees which were also kept under observation. Further, as in the case of the first-mentioned series, the sick locust trees subjected to the treatment grew finer and larger even than the ones considered healthy at the beginning of the experiment.

Turning from forest trees to fruit trees, the results are still more remarkable. In an old neglected orchard where the growth was weak, the yield of fruit miserable, and the quality thereof poor, about the middle of April the year before last, various nutritive salts, such as potassium phosphate, both in solution and dry, were introduced into the trunks of the trees, and by the middle of May their appearance had changed. They had grown visibly firmer, the condition of the foliage had improved, and the improvement was still further confirmed by the greater and finer quality of the fruit yield; the yield, for example, in the case of pears being superior to that of the previous ones from the same trees by some 27 per cent.

Still more striking evidence was yielded in the Tchotti Estate, in the district of Simpheropol, in the case of a number of thirty year old diseased apple trees of a special kind called the Sari Sinap. These had suffered very badly from the frost of 1901 and dried up, consequent on which they remained through 1902 to the spring of 1903 restricted in their growth, with weak buds, and branches weakly developed and spare foliage, the greater part discoloured, void of the usual lively green colour; in fact, suffering from chlorosis, with atrophied parts of bark on the trunk and branches in an apparently hopeless condition and fit to be destroyed. These were treated as were the others above described, but with artificial mineral fertilisers. It should be mentioned that the chemicals are introduced through slits in the bark in such manner that the outer air does not get in to attack the wood, the fibre of which easily absorbs the solution. The result was simply marvellous. About the end of June all the apple trees (about forty) subjected to the process had straightened out bravely, budded healthily, covered themselves with a thick foliage, and carried strong fruit, which for size and weight far and away surpassed the fruit even of the healthy trees that had had no need of a physician. The data in figures are given in support of the foregoing statement. The average weight of the Sinap apple from the diseased trees without treatment was from 15 to 17 grammes, whilst that from the healthy trees was from 22 to 23 grammes, and the weight of the apples from the diseased trees after treatment was about 31 grammes. Quite as fine results were obtained from the Rosemary variety. Generally the result was that apple trees treated with applications through the bark above the ground yielded fruit twice as heavy as that



ITALY OF THE RENAISSANCE: FAMILY LIFE.

from the diseased trees kept under observation, and 29 per cent. heavier than that from normal healthy apple trees, and also presented a fine, fresh colour.

A yet further interesting test was that of an apple tree in an orchard in Sudak in a very weak condition. The fruit it gave back in the autumn was clean and healthy, whilst throughout the rest of the orchard from the other trees not a single unblemished apple could be got.

Particular attention is drawn to the value of the above-described method of curing weak and diseased trees in those cases where from one cause or another the roots are in bad condition and will not respond to the usual applications of artificial fertilisers. The only apparent possible hope for such trees is the above-ground introduction of chemicals. For example, Mr. Mokrgetski reports that in the case of an orchard belonging to one Tayursk, in the Simpheropol district, the roots of the apple trees had suffered severely from floods, and failed to do their part. He applied his remedy, and in a very short time they were quite straight and strong again.

It must be stated that the experiments were not confined to private gardens or orchards. The eminent experimenter obtained permission to treat trees in the Government public gardens; but red tape interfered sadly with his operations, and the carelessness (or perhaps design) of the superintendent of the Salgirki Government Estate—by failing to keep the specimens of fruit—spoiled the chances of getting exact returns on the first series of experiments there. The first objection raised was that whereas he had a permit to make experiments in combating insects, the permit did not include the right to slit barks and make insertions of chemicals which might injure Government property. The result was an exchange of letters with the Ministry of Agriculture, and a delay which threw the experiments back to the second half of the year. Nevertheless, he made some trials with rennet trees. And one curious piece of knowledge was hereby obtained, which was that if



there was but one incision and injection of chemical, the action of the salts would be but on one side of the tree. At all events, that was what happened with the class of apple tree mentioned. On one side of the tree ferrous sulphate was applied, and then a nutritive salt; and that tree, says Mr. Mokrgetski, offered the phenomenal spectacle of one side (the untreated one) unhealthy, and the other (the treated one) in fine condition.

Space fails to include many more interesting experiments made; but a note of especial interest now is that since the series of tests dealt with were made, the attention of Mr. Mokrgetski has been directed to the terrible scourge of gummosis, or running of the gum in stone fruit trees, such as apricots, prunes, peaches, and cherries, due, as has been confirmed by investigations, to a special species of bacteria, which, taking advantage of some opening in the bark, penetrates, and thus opens the way to the bleeding of gum. It is a sickness very like the once-supposed cancer to which fruit trees were exposed, and thought to have been caused by a kind of fungus, but which the investigations of the professor of Cracow, Mr. Brjesinsk, have proved to be owing to a special kind of bacteria. Mr. Mokrgetski tried salicylic acid as an injection, applied as already described, and he found that it was possible to compose such a solution of this acid as would disinfect the tree without injuring it. His experience on the trees of Berdiansk should be related in full. There some apricot trees were so badly infected that they were marked for removal because of gummosis. The fresh buds of the trees were covered with gum as with a glaze. After treatment of the disease with a 1 per cent. solution of this acid, the gum fell from the branches, the wounds cleaned, and fresh buds appeared thickly furnished with leaves. In a word, the trees were saved and the bleeding of gum did not reappear. This is the result of the first test, which by virtue of its solitude cannot be called other than fascinating; but we may rest assured that such an encouraging occurrence will lead to a repetition of the test till it has been shown whether the inoculation with chemicals is the cause of the cessation of this fell disease, as seems clearly proved was the case with the troubles to which the other experiments enumerated were directed. The experiments have been much more comprehensive than have been detailed here. It was also found that, whereas nearly all diseases that afflict vines, etc., from insects are due to anæmia following on a poor or impoverished soil, the application of chemicals through the bark above ground proved to be prompt notice to the new tenants of the trees or vines to quit.

## BIRD-LIFE OF A HIGHLAND LOCH.

**F**AR up amongst the Scottish hills, which shelter it from the winds, lies a mountain loch, the abode of countless birds of all descriptions. On the loch are two islands—one fairly large and covered with grass, the other smaller with clumps of willow. To the west the mountains rise abruptly to a height of nearly 3,000ft., and are the home of the beautiful ptarmigan. To the east the hills are much smaller, and an extensive view is obtained of the valley stretching down towards the sea. Clumps of sweet-smelling birches, clothed in the tenderest green, fringe the shore of the loch. On the larger island numbers of common terns have their nesting site, and as your boat approaches these rise in numbers from their nests, uttering their jarring note, sounding like "kik kik kerie." It is noticeable that the south and west shores of the island are preferred by them for nesting, not a single nest being found on the north or east shores, the reason being that on a warm, sunny day the terns allow the sun to hatch the eggs, while on the north or east shores it would not strike with sufficient power to do this.

On your arrival at the island an oyster-catcher flies round and round you in a great state of excitement, which is explained by the finding of two half-grown downy youngsters hiding in the long grass. About a month previously, this same oyster-catcher was the proud possessor of a nest containing three beautiful speckled eggs, but unfortunately a boat-load of farm servants paid a visit to the island and robbed the nest. This was seen by a keeper, and after an exciting chase the boat was overtaken and the eggs replaced in the nest. By this time the eggs were quite cold, but luckily they hatched off safely.

This year there appears to be a slight decrease of the common tern, but at least a dozen pairs are flying about in the vicinity. One nest is found with the young just hatching, and you hear the tapping of the young bird's beak as he breaks through his prison. Now you see a tufted duck rise from some rushes hard by, revealing a nest containing nine creamy white eggs. The tufted duck is not at all a common bird in the North, but some pairs nest annually on the loch. The nest is distinguished from that of the mallard by the fact that the down tufts are much darker, and also that the eggs are far more polished than those of the common wild duck. The tufted duck rarely nests before the end of May, while its near relative, the mallard, often has eggs as early as March. A little further along a sandpiper rises, while you are still a good distance away, which makes one feel doubtful whether she has a nest; but the discovery of four pear-shaped eggs of a brownish white ground colour, and spotted and blotched with reddish brown, soon sets all doubts at rest. All the time you are in the vicinity of their nests, the sandpipers keep flying

uneasily round and round the island, uttering their long-drawn plaintive whistle, and are exceedingly tame. It is a strange fact that the sandpiper will sometimes sit so closely as to allow herself to be taken with the hand, while at others she is a very light sitter, even when the nest is well concealed. Nests are also found of the coot and moorhen in the rushes fringing the loch. Directly you shove off your boat from the island, the terns commence to hover over their nests, and one by one drop down on them.

The smaller island is now visited, and while you are yet some distance off you note that numbers of sandpipers are flying round the islet, which is only about 100yds. in circumference. In all probability they have young ones, but your search is fruitless. However, another tufted duck's nest is discovered, from which the birds have been hatched, while there is one rotten egg remaining in the nest. The only other find is a great tit's nest, containing no eggs, but thousands of exceptionally hungry fleas, which give rather an unpleasant surprise. All this time a mallard keeps swimming to and fro at a little distance from the island. She probably has young ones hiding, so you retire cautiously. In a few minutes the mallard rises from the water, and flies right over your head. Then, apparently satisfied, she returns to the island, near which she swims for a short time. Soon you see two nearly full-grown young duck slide into the water, and accompany their mother across the loch. Now a kestrel wings rapidly past, pursued by an oyster-catcher, which has young in the neighbourhood. There was a time when common gulls used to nest on the grassy island, but they were greatly persecuted by the neighbouring keepers, and in consequence dwindled in numbers each season, until this summer there is scarcely a single one on the loch. It is extremely pathetic to see the birds returning every year to their ancient nesting site; but when the keepers hear of their arrival they usually place poisoned eggs on the island, so that the gulls are either killed in this way, or are forced to seek other nesting quarters. The gulls now breed on some of the highest hills in Scotland, and the nest is often found at an altitude of 3,000ft., where they probably steal large numbers of ptarmigan's eggs, as I have seen them ranging over the ptarmigan breeding haunts. But now dark clouds are enveloping the hills to the westward, so after a steady pull across the loch in the failing light, you reach the boat-house and set out for home.

SETON P. GORDON.

## ALPINE PERILS.

**T**URNING over a back number of the *Alpine Journal*, I lighted on the opening sentences of a *résumé* of climbing accidents by the editor. It sums up the attitude often taken by the public, who, naturally enough, are apt to form their opinions from the non-expert reports of most newspaper correspondents.

"What a great number of Alpine accidents have happened this year!" the non-climber is supposed to say to the writer.

"I beg your pardon?"

The assertion is repeated.

"I cannot agree with you."

"What, have you not read of them in the newspapers week after week?"

"Yes, I have read many harrowing narratives, but what do you mean by an accident?"

"An unforeseen or unexpected event."

"Well, in the great majority of cases this definition will not apply. These catastrophes cannot be described as either 'unforeseen' or 'unexpected.' Competent mountaineers would have foreseen most of these so-called accidents."

The following true tales of mountain adventure are typical of what the novice, and, alas! sometimes the experienced climber, meets with in his pastime. The reader may form his own judgment as to how many of the incidents were due to "accident," and in which cases they were the result of wilful disregard of common precautions.

One of the most thrilling stories in Alpine history is that of Mr. Sloggett's fall on the Matterhorn. With two Zermatt guides—Alphons Furrer and Augustin Gentinetta—this young Englishman had made a quick ascent of the mountain, and was a long way down on the return journey. At one spot it was necessary to cross a couloir, or gully of snow and ice, and down this channel fall most of the stones that detach themselves from the shattered face of the peak. The leading guide, Furrer, was making his way over, when a stone, dropping from a considerable height, struck him full on the head and instantly killed him. The two others, attached by their rope to his dead body, were unable in their precarious foothold to resist the shock, and were immediately swept away down the couloir at terrific speed. Their axes were torn from their grasp, and Gentinetta, who never lost consciousness, was convinced that death must await them at the end of that awful journey. But this man of iron nerve kept his presence of mind, and showed what a stout heart and a keen intelligence can do even in the most desperate situation. About 800ft. below the spot where the party were carried off, a small bergschrund or crevasse ran across the ice-slope which forms the base of the Matterhorn on its eastern side. This crevasse is not always open; in fact, in October, 1903, when I went on to the mountain to photograph the scene of this accident, it did not exist at all. Beneath it are ice-cliffs, and anyone shooting the crevasse and



Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond

IN THE ZERMAIT DISTRICT.

Copyright.

falling over these would have a sheer drop which must immediately be fatal. But in Mr. Sloggett's case the crack was several feet wide, and into it the two still living men and their dead companion were precipitated. The chasm was partly filled with stones and sand, and Mr. Sloggett fell face down. Gentinetta, though terribly bruised, without an instant's delay seized the helpless form of his employer, pulled him out of the position in which he lay, almost suffocating, and cleared the sand out of his throat and eyes. His jaw was broken, and his bruises were even worse than those of Gentinetta, but no other bones were broken. The disaster was already bad enough, but at any moment an even more terrible catastrophe threatened the two poor wounded men in the crevasse. The couloir was, as I have said, a natural channel for falling stones, and it was just the hottest hour of the day, when the snow was thawing fast and unloosening from its fetters the missiles it had earlier held fast frozen to the mountain. It was imperative to lose no time in waiting for assistance from the other parties who were on the Matterhorn. So the guide and the Englishman, without axes, bruised, shaken,

and weak, started on the desperate task of climbing back up that glassy, blood-stained wall—a task hard enough even for an uninjured and fully-equipped party. How it was accomplished, Gentinetta declares he does not know, but by an extraordinary display of pluck and skill the two at length reached their old tracks and gained a place of safety. Assistance was now at hand, and with the help of the other parties the wounded men eventually arrived at the Schwarzsee Hotel. Though laid up for many weeks after, both in the end made an excellent recovery. Poor Furrer's body was, with much difficulty, brought down next day from the crevasse.

The tragedy of a fatal accident on Mont Blanc is accentuated in those cases where it has been impossible to find the bodies of the victims. This has happened at least five times on that mountain, but on two occasions the remains have been in part recovered from the lower end of the glacier many years after the tragedy occurred. On October 12th, 1866, two parties slept at the tiny inn at the Grands Mulets, intending to ascend Mont Blanc next day. One party included Captain Henry Arkwright, with a

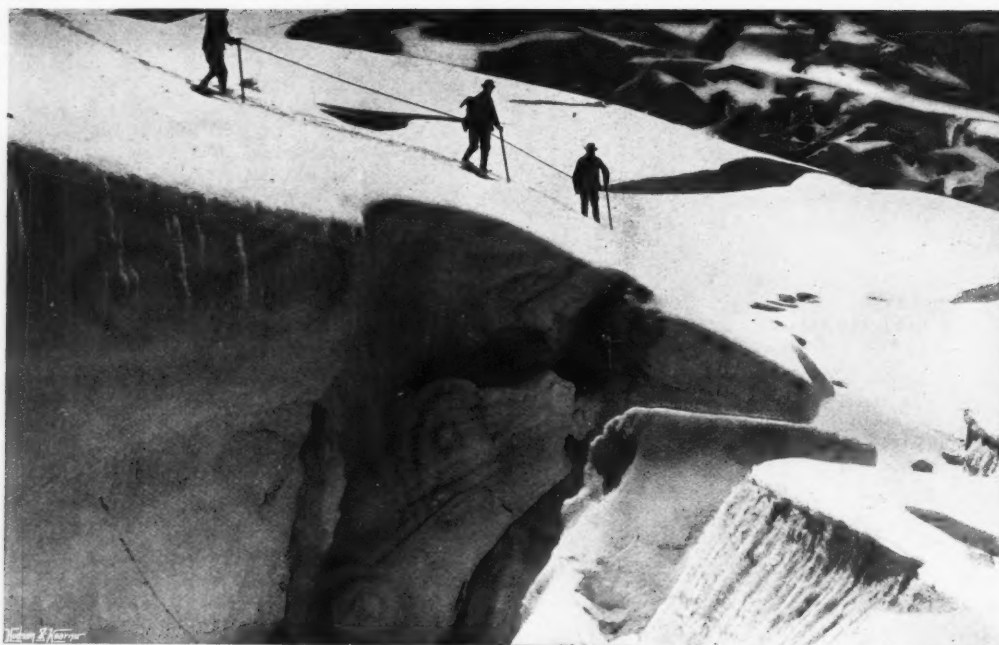


Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond.

PIR BERNINA FROM FIZ SISSONE.

Copyright





Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond.

CREVASSES, TELLA PASS.

Copyright.

guide and two porters; the other consisted of Sylvain Couttet, the landlord of the inn, with Nicholas Winhart, an employé of one of the Chamonix hotels. Couttet was guiding him up Mont Blanc, in fulfilment of a promise to take him on the mountain as soon as the busy summer season was over.

On the 13th both parties set out at an early hour from the Grands Mulets. All the ascents made at the beginning of the last century were by a route known as the "Ancien Passage." This entailed a climb up a steep snow slope, and under certain conditions it was necessary to be for a short time beneath some cliffs of ice which occasionally split and sent down huge blocks across the track. A terrible

accident had taken place at this spot some years before, when Dr. Hamel's party was swept away in an avalanche, and since then the route had been avoided, and that by the so-called "Corridor" taken instead. But in October the days are short, and the "Ancien Passage" is two hours quicker than the other way. The climbers, therefore, directed their steps towards the "Ancien Passage," and commenced to mount the slope. At just the same spot where an avalanche of snow had started beneath the feet of Dr. Hamel's party, an avalanche of ice was precipitated upon the two caravans of Captain Arkwright and Couttet. All endeavoured to keep their footing by thrusting their sticks and axes as deeply as possible into the underlying snow. Couttet and Winhart managed to hold, but the others, who were more exposed to the avalanche, were swept away. It was not till nearly

romin. had passed that the air cleared sufficiently for Couttet to discern Winhart, who was leaning on his alpenstock about 6ft. away, with the rope unbroken between them. The others were nowhere to be seen, and on the plateau below was an enormous accumulation of blocks of ice and snow, spread out in every direction for a great distance. Unroping themselves, the two survivors commenced to explore the mass of *débris*. Soon they noticed a knapsack, then the body of François Tournier, one of the porters. It was terribly mutilated, and the rope attaching him to his companions was broken. For two hours longer they searched, but found nothing more, and set out exhausted and broken-hearted on the descent. On reaching the Grands Mulets



Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond.

DESCENDING AN ENGADINE PEAK IN A STORM.

Copyright





Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond.

BELOW TABARETTA SPITZ ORKER.

Copyright.

they were met by three guides who had accompanied Miss Arkwright, Captain Arkwright's sister, a girl of twenty, to the inn the day before. "How is it you are still here?" asked Couttet. "Has not his sister gone down yet?" "No," they replied, "she is waiting for him."

The hard task of breaking the sad news to the unsuspecting young girl fell to Couttet; her guides absolutely refused to undertake it. He went in and found her sitting sketching at the window. Seeing her so happy and unconscious of trouble, poor Couttet felt unable to utter a word, and stood gazing at her from the door. She turned round.

"Well, Sylvain?"

He still could not speak. He could only lift his hands.

"My brother?" she exclaimed.

"Have courage, Mademoiselle," was all he could say.

She became white as the snow. She went to the window, knelt down, and with joined hands prayed as she gazed on the mountain. Then she came straight to Couttet, and said, "You can tell me all now. I am ready."

M. Charles Durier, in his work on Mont Blanc, says that the courage and self-control of the young Englishwoman made such an impression on Couttet, that in relating this scene to the writer three years later he wept as he did so. For ten days afterwards various parties searched unremittingly for the remains of the victims, and recovered all the bodies except that of Captain Arkwright. Bad weather then set in, and no one ventured again on the mountain till the following summer, by which time all hope of finding anything had of course been abandoned. Thirty-one years later, on August 23rd, 1897, a brother of Captain Arkwright (Colonel Arkwright of Thorby Priory) received a telegram from the Mayor of Chamonix, advising him that Henry Arkwright's remains had been found. He went immediately

to Chamonix and was shown the spot in the lower portion of the Glacier des Bossons to which, during all those years, the body had travelled in the ice from the place where the avalanche overwhelmed it, some 10,000ft. higher up. In addition to the remains of the poor young man various articles belonging to him were recovered. The knot was still firmly tied in the rope, but the rope was worn through on each side near the front, no doubt from the pressure of certain bones. A waistband and pocket-handkerchief were still clearly marked with his name and regiment. His white linen shirt front had its studs uninjured. His watch-chain was not only unbroken, but unscratched; the watch had been left at the inn before starting for the ascent. A gold sliding pencil-case worked as smoothly as ever. Various other things, such as coins and prune stones, were also discovered. So ends the history of one of the most deeply-interesting of the many sad accidents that have happened on Mont Blanc.

AUBREY LE BLOND.



Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond.

NEGOTIATING A CREVASSE GLACIER.

Copyright.



THE famous house of Aston is the compeer of such great places as Hatfield, Crewe, and Burghley. It has architectural affinities with nearly all the noble mansions which date from its time. Although history is silent as to the name of its architect, it possesses such nobility of character, such admirable grouping of parts, and such charming freshness of detail that we recognise in its mellow brick walls the work of master hands. Misfortunes have crowded upon it, and destruction has impended over it; but—albeit in surroundings new and strange—it still stands in majestic form as a superlative exemplar of the Jacobean Age. Its condition is changed, and it is now a museum and a picture gallery, happily rescued from peril and made secure by the public spirit of the gentlemen of Birmingham and the municipal authorities of that city. Yet, if we close our eyes, we still seem to recall its princely state, to hear again the rustle of wimple and farthingale, the voice of the cavalier, and the clang of arms—to breathe, in a word, in these venerable chambers the atmosphere that filled them in their prime. Crowning a gently-rising eminence, with elms, Spanish chestnuts, and beautiful gardens for its neighbours, it presents to the observer, on the main or east front, a hollow square, with

advancing wings and an array of mullioned windows, bays, ornamental crestings, pinnacles, chimneys, towers, and cupolas that is nothing less than superb, while on the southern front, the enriched open arcades, multitudinous panes, and curved gables have a singularly attractive character.

Before, however, we proceed to any description of the house, let us say something of the builder and his ancestors, for the house is in a real sense the vesture of the man. Sir Thomas Holte, the Royalist founder, who welcomed King Charles at his "poor house of Aston," came from a stout Warwickshire stock. Davidson, who has written the history of the family, takes us back to one Sir Henry Holte, who may or may not have lived hereabout in the thirteenth century, but we are content, with Dugdale, to note as the original Hugh del Holte or atte Holte, who died in 1322. The word holt signifies a wood or grove, and so we see that the ancestors of the builder of Aston were dwellers in the greenwood of Warwickshire. John atte Holte followed, and then Simon, styled of Birmingham, after whom came other Johns and a Walter—all men of consideration and apparently of growing wealth. Next we encounter the singular Christian name of Audomar, or Aymer. John Holte, who was living in 1470, was a follower of Richard Neville, Earl of







"COUNTRY LIFE."

EASTERN FACADE.

Copyright



Copyright

SOUTH-EAST LOGGIA.

"COUNTRY LIFE."





Copyright

SOUTH-WEST LOGGIA.

"COUNTRY LIFE,"

Warwick, the King-maker, and was given the office of Ranger of Sutton Chase. The altar tomb of his grandson William Holte may be seen in Aston Church, with his effigy clad in armour, with surcoat, the hands joined in prayer, the head resting on a helm, and a lion lying at his feet, while the inscription describes him as "sometime lord of this towne." His son Thomas was a "learned lawyer," and Justice of North Wales in the reign of Henry VIII. His effigy is also in the church, clad in a gown, with a parchment roll in his hand, and the figure of his wife is there also. The rhyming inscription upon the Justice is singular:

"Thomas Holte here lyeth in grave;  
Ihu for thyn passyon  
On him thou have compassyon,  
And his soolle do save."

The learned lawyer's son was Edward Holte, Justice of the Peace for Warwickshire and High Sheriff in 1583. He also

the tablet over the entrance records, in April, 1618. His great-grandson described him as "a gentleman well read in most parts of learning and versed in several languages," and as "highly esteemed in his county by men of all conditions, being of an even temper, truly great, charitable, and exemplary in his life and conversation." It may be, perhaps, that this amiable eulogy requires some qualification, as we shall see. Much wealth had come to the family through marriages with heiresses, and it was further enriched by the marriage of Sir Thomas with a daughter and co-heiress of William Bradburne of Hough, in Derbyshire. He appears thereby to have been enabled to put in hand his magnificent mansion, the work upon which extended over a great many years, for although begun in 1618, it was not occupied, as the inscription testifies, until 1631, nor completed until 1635, the baronet being then of the age of sixty-four. He appears to have been of a somewhat irascible temperament, and it is fabled that in a fit of passion he slew his cook. He certainly prosecuted a man of Birmingham for saying he

had done so, and secured damages to the extent of £10 at the trial at Warwick, though the verdict was subsequently reversed, as is believed, on a technicality. The allegation was that "Sir Thomas Holte tooke a cleever and hytt his cooke with the same cleever uppon the heade, and clave his heade; that one syde fell uppone one of his shoulders, and the other syde on the other shoulder."

We may, perhaps, dismiss this story as mendacious. There is more authority for saying that Sir Thomas was violently opposed to the marriage of his son Edward with Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. King, Bishop of London. The baronet seems to have thought the marriage unequal, and threatened to disinherit the young man; but King Charles, in whose favour Sir Thomas stood high, intervened, and induced some degree of harmony. The King thought blessing should follow union with the daughter of "a soe reverend and good a man," and concluded: "Wee doe, therefore, recomende it to you that you doe not only forbear any act against your sonne in respect of his match, but that you restore him into your former favour and good opinion, wherein Wee doubt not that our mediation, upon grounds of much reason and indifference, will soe far prevaile with you, that Wee shall have cause to accept graciously your answer, which Wee expect you return unto Us with all conveniency."

Sir Thomas lived in high state at Aston, and in October, 1642, had the honour of receiving his Royal master in his splendid abode. Charles was marching to relieve Banbury



Copyright.

BETWEEN THE WINGS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

lies buried with his ancestors at Aston. He died "about Candellmas," 1592, says his inscription, which also describes him as lord of Duddeston; and he is represented in effigy, with flowing hair and a peaked beard, with his wife, who was a daughter of John Ferrers of Tamworth Castle.

Their son, Sir Thomas Holte, who was born in 1571, and who enjoyed the possession of his property for the space of some sixty-two years, was the builder of Aston Hall, and it was he who raised his family to the highest pitch of prosperity. He was High Sheriff of the county in 1599, and, being a member of a deputation which welcomed King James on his coming to England, he was knighted in 1603 at Grimston, being advanced to the dignity of a baronetcy in November, 1612. The old manor house of Duddeston, in which the Holtes had lived, now became insufficient for the high state to which they had attained, and hence it was that Sir Thomas Holte turned his attention to the building of Aston Hall, which he began, as

Castle, and stayed at Aston on October 16th and 17th, and left behind him several memorials of his visit, which passed from the last baronet to the Bracebridge family. They formed part of the exhibition held at Aston, being lent by Mr. Bracebridge, when Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort opened the hall and park for the use of the people on June 15th, 1858, and were bequeathed to the town by Mr. Charles Holte Bracebridge in 1872. A few days after the visit of Charles to Aston the battle of Edgehill was fought, where Edward Holte was wounded, and though he recovered and was engaged in the defence of Oxford in August, 1643, he contracted a fever there which proved fatal in the same month. There is some reason to believe that Sir Thomas Holte, though he may have relented in some degree, remained finally implacable in regard to the marriage of his son. The storm of the Civil War reached his house in December 1643, when Dugdale records that Colonel Leveson, governor of Dudley Castle, at his request, placed a guard of forty musketeer

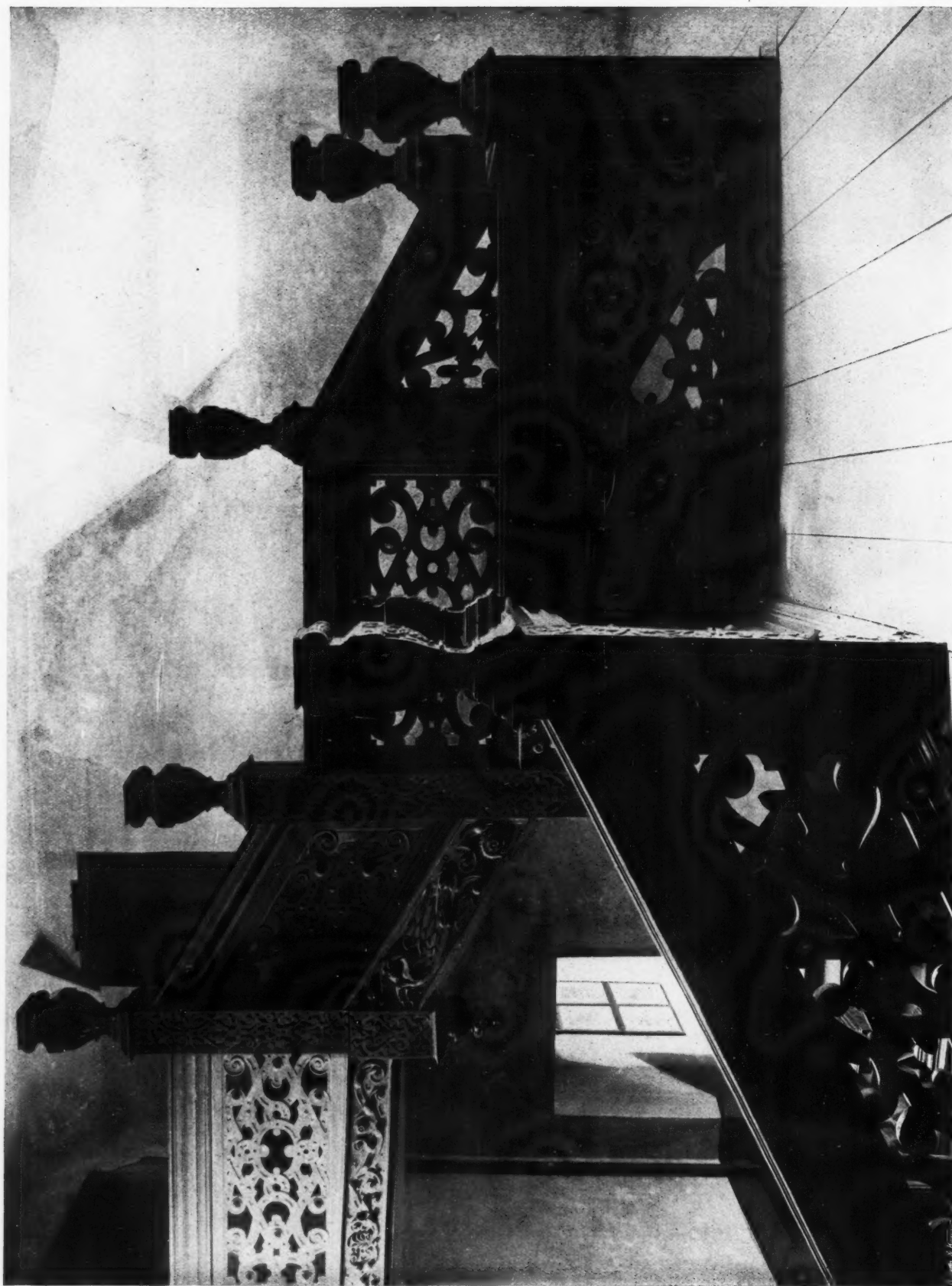




Copyright

OAK.

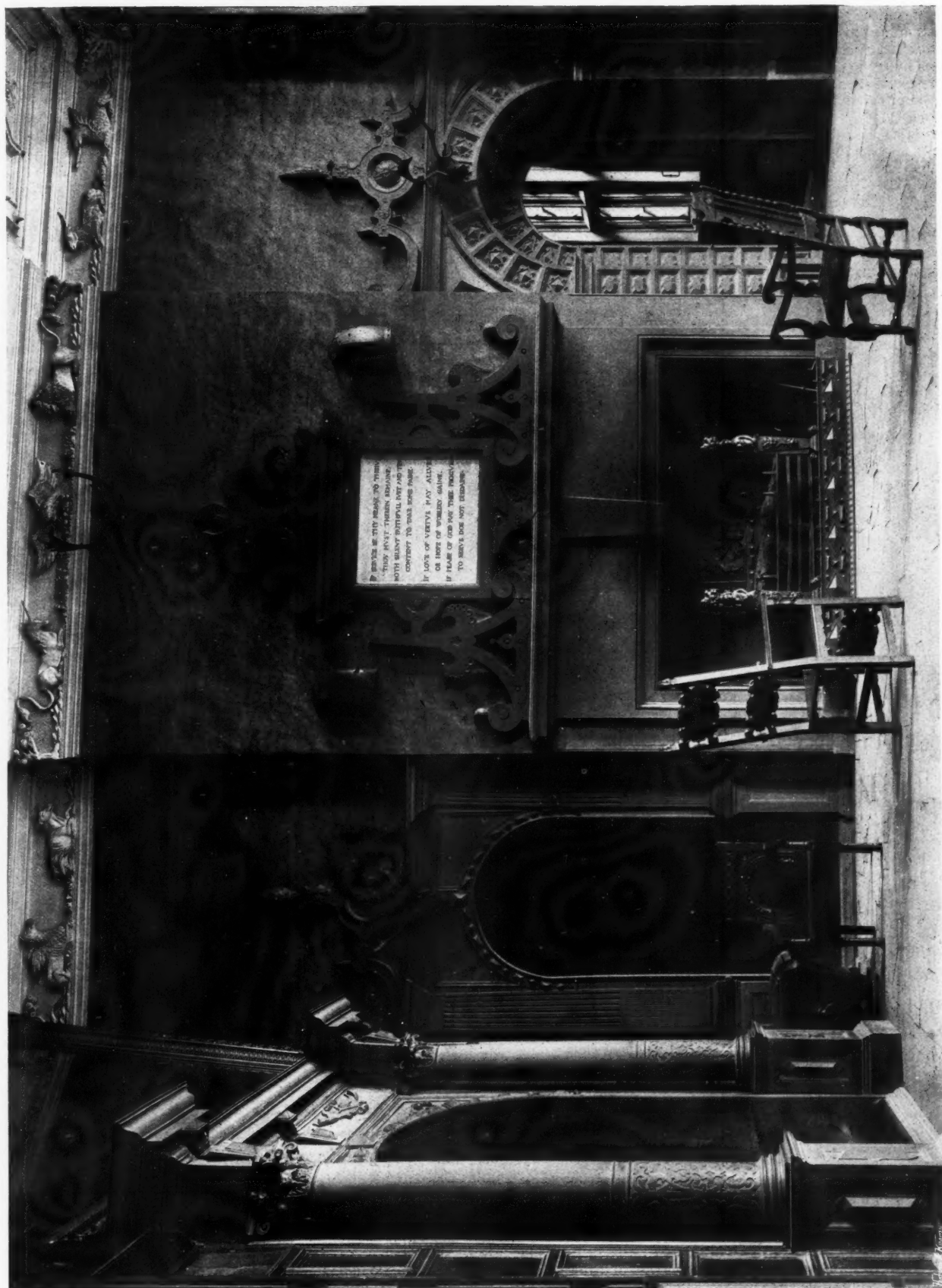
"COUNTRY LIFE."



"COUNTRY LIFE."

TOP GALLERY.





"COUNTRY LIFE."

NORTH SIDE OF THE HALL.

Copyright

"COUNTRY LIFE."

TOP GALLERY.

Copyright

in the Hall. The men of Birmingham were growing dangerous, and on December 26th, to the number of 1,200, they began to attack the house, bringing up guns, which have left their mark on the south-west wing, while one ball, passing through the wall, knocked off an ornament from a baluster of the staircase and lodged in the panelling behind. The defence was continued for three days, but, when twelve Royalists had been killed, the defenders surrendered. Pillage followed, and much damage was presumably done, but the family papers had previously been removed to a place of safety. Sir Thomas suffered for his loyalty; his goods were confiscated, and he compounded for his estates by paying the sum of £4,401, which, in the money of our time, represents a far larger sum. He appears to have been a man of proud, obstinate, and resolute character, and he stood very high in the Royal favour, being at one time selected by Charles, as a person of great learning and influence, to serve as Ambassador to Spain, but he was excused owing to his great age. His portrait by Van Somer was exhibited at South Kensington in the Loan Collection of National Portraits in 1886.

Something shall now be said of the great house which the sturdy old baronet built and adorned, though the fine pictures shall be left to complete the tale. The principal entrance is by the church gate, which has an arch spanned by a curious ogee crocketed arch, flanked by two posterns and picturesque lodges.

admirable colonnades extend on either side. Adjoining the great drawing-room, and over the eastern arcade, are the King's bedroom and dressing-room. Lady Holte's drawing-room is over the second colonnade, and suffered much in the siege. The west front of the mansion is also very attractive, and appears to have been designed with special reference to the long gallery, which is in the upper part of it.

Passing through the main entrance, we reach the great hall, a splendid apartment nearly 50ft. long by 25ft. wide, lighted by four noble windows. The plaster ceiling is most wonderfully sculptured, moulded, and otherwise adorned, and a bold cornice, with grotesque animals, runs round the walls. Opposite to the entrance is a doorway communicating with the apartments on the west side of the house, and there are arched alcoves, or apartments of unusual character. The fire-back has the Royal Arms and the initials "C. R.," and over the mantel are moral verses:

"If service be thy meane to thrive  
Thov mvst therein remaine,  
Both silent faithfvl jvst and true  
Content to take some paine;  
If love of vrtue may allvre  
Or hope of worldly gaine;  
If fear of God may thee procvre  
To serve doe not disdaine."



Copyright.

SOUTH-WEST ANGLE, WITH SOUTH-EAST GATEHOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

From this point a road leads to the old avenue of chestnuts and elms, of which several weather-beaten veterans remain. As has been suggested, the grand entrance front testifies to the opulence and princely tastes of the founder. The wings project boldly to form the courtyard, and the cupola-crowned towers advance into the area, each having an entrance on the ground floor, consisting of a square-panelled door under a semi-circular arch ornamented with the shell ornament and flanked by flat fluted pilasters. All the details are exceedingly beautiful. In the central block the principal features are the enriched doorway and the splendid windows, lighting the entrance-hall and the great oak staircase, with the massive central tower of three storeys. The doorway has a semi-circular arch with fluted columns on square bases, supporting an entablature, over which is the commemorative tablet which has been alluded to, with the words *LAVS DEO*, and the arms of Holte. On the south front of the house is a central projection containing the window of the chapel, and the large ones of the great drawing-room, while

The staircase is magnificent, rich in venerable carved oak, seamed with age, all quaint and beautiful, with much less of the Italian character than is commonly found in houses of the date. The newels are surmounted by large vase-like terminals, capped with Ionic volutes, while the posts are sculptured with arabesques. On the outer string of the staircase fine dolphins and sea-monsters are boldly and admirably carved. The cannon ball which carried away the cresting of one of the newels is still preserved, and the shattered newel remains. The great drawing-room is entered at the second landing, and is a noble chamber lighted by two mullioned and transomed windows on the south. The carved stone frieze is in admirable style, and in semi-circular niches along the walls Roman and Elizabethan soldiers are executed in high relief. The ceiling is greatly enriched, and the chimney-piece, which is of white stone, alabaster, and black marble, is most richly sculptured with grotesques, mouldings, and armorial achievements. The King's chamber is entered from the drawing-room, and is small and unpretentious, with a geo-



metrical ceiling and a frieze, and the walls are hung with curious cross-stitch tapestry executed by Mary Holte and her sisters in and about the year 1744 in memory of King Charles. Lady Holte's drawing-room has a very pretty ceiling and a most excellent fireplace. We may now enter the long gallery, which, perhaps, with the exception of the great apartments at Hardwick, Haddon, and Hatfield, is the finest in the country. It is

is believed to have presented to Sir Thomas Holte. The chimney-piece is large, ornate, and of very striking character.

We shall not, however, describe further the magnificent house which Sir Thomas Holte built and adorned. All that remains is to indicate briefly its subsequent history. Sir Thomas Holte was succeeded in his title and possessions by his grandson Sir Robert, who was active in promoting the Restoration, and



Copyright

PART OF THE LONG GALLERY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

156ft. long, 18ft. wide, and 16ft. high, and the walls are wholly covered with splendid oak panelling, divided into compartments by Ionic pilasters, the panels themselves having semi-circular arches. The ceiling is enriched with elaborate panelling in plaster, and is particularly grand, while on the walls hang interesting portraits bequeathed by the late Mr. Charles Bracebridge Holte. Here also is the fine walnut inlaid cabinet which King Charles

was sheriff and M.P. for the county. The third baronet was also M.P. for Warwickshire, and was a person of great learning and consideration, being a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Medicine. His son was Sir Clobery Holte, after whom came Sir Lister Holte, and the brother of the latter, Sir Charles, who died childless in 1782, when the baronetcy became extinct. The widow of the last baronet left all her property to her daughter,

Mrs. Bracebridge, and thus the estates passed to the Bracebridge family. In 1817, by indenture, confirmed by Act of Parliament, the property, valued at £600,000, was vested in trustees, and in the same year the furniture was sold. The hall itself, with a large acreage of the property, was sold in April, 1818, and passing through various hands, was in danger of being destroyed, when a limited company was formed in 1857 to acquire the mansion and forty-three acres for the use of the public at a cost of £35,000. The property was subsequently vested in the Corporation of Birmingham, and was converted into a public museum and picture gallery, and its grounds laid out and planted. Thus the venerable structure is happily to be preserved in perpetuity, and, though we may regret its conversion from domestic to public uses, we cannot but rejoice that the grand house remains in the hands of those who will value and maintain it.

## THE WEASEL.

**I**N spite of the persistent persecution to which he has been subjected for so many years at the hands of the game-keeper and the rabbit-catcher, the weasel is still far from becoming extinct in many parts of the country, and continues to wage war upon all rats, mice, and voles, which constitute his chief prey. The female is much smaller than the male, and is called the *kine* in some of the Home Counties. Gilbert White tells us that in the neighbourhood of Selborne it was known as *cane* in his day. She is said to produce four or five young at a birth, and to have two or three litters in the course of a year, but I believe this number must frequently be exceeded. Indeed, were it not so, it is difficult to imagine how the stock could be kept up, for the number killed in some places is extraordinary. One keeper in Northumberland, who had been in his situation many years, once told me that he believed he killed on an average between 200 and 250 weasels every year, and I have seen such rows of them nailed up in his "museums" (as the rails upon which vermin are exhibited are called) as would almost seem to justify his statement; and yet this was in a cultivated district, where game is strictly preserved all round, and where trapping is incessant. This man's father, who was keeper upon an adjoining estate, also destroyed a great many in the course of a year, and amongst his captures one season were three weasels, each of which had a white saddle-shaped patch across the shoulders. They were all caught in the same place, and no doubt would belong to one brood.

Another gamekeeper, whose beat bordered upon a wilder district in the same county, killed 125 of these animals in 1884, but in the following year he could only account for twelve. Rabbit-catchers also destroy a large number, though the weight

of the smaller weasels, being insufficient to spring an ordinary steel trap, unless it be very "kittle set," often saves their lives by enabling them to cross the fatal "kittle-board" with impunity.

The mole-catcher, too, not infrequently finds a weasel in his trap, and no doubt "the little gentleman in the black velvet coat" must often fall a prey to it; but that the runs of the mole are sometimes made use of by the weasel for other purposes than for the slaughter of their owners was once demonstrated to me in a singularly interesting manner. I had for some time been watching a flock of peewits running about a piece of very bare grass, when I became aware that a small weasel, who was

popping in and out the interstices of an old sod dyke near by, was also evidently interested in them, though the idea that he could be contemplating catching one of the birds scarcely entered my head. However, he began working his way out into the field towards them by dodging up small hollows in the ground, and taking advantage of such sparse cover as was to be found behind stones, mole-hills, and the like. Occasionally he would disappear, for some minutes at a time, into the underground galleries of the mole, with whose geography he seemed to be intimately acquainted, for they always led him nearer and nearer to his unsuspecting prey. At length, after he had been invisible for quite a long time, and when I was beginning to think that I had seen the last of him—that, in fact, he had at last fallen in with the mole or field-mouse, for which he had really been hunting all the time—some of the peewits started suddenly up, with cries of alarm which raised the whole flock; and one of those which

had first risen, and which had already mounted several feet into the air, was seen to be in difficulties, and fell struggling to the ground. Before I could run up the bird was quite dead, and only on my near approach did the weasel quit it and bolt back into the mole's run, of which he had made such excellent use in his stalk. Having once gained the shelter of the hole, he turned about and faced me, as a weasel will so often do, and seemed to resent my interference; and as I considered that his cunning and skill had certainly earned the reward, I withdrew and left him his plover, and can only hope that his dinner was not further interrupted. His actual spring upon the bird I did not witness, and can only conjecture that as the ground was too bare to admit of the possibility of his approach within striking distance on the surface, he had advanced underground as near as the runs of the mole permitted, and then lain *perdu* in the hole until a bird had unwittingly come near enough to enable him to pounce upon it.

Any variation in colour in the weasel is very exceptional, but in addition to the three pied specimens already alluded to, two



Copyright.

ASTOR HALL: NORTH-EAST GATEHOUSE.

'COUNTRY LIFE.'



other instances of partly white ones have come under my observation. One of those was nearly wholly white, with just a little brown showing down the middle of the back and about the head and neck. The only other variety I have seen was one caught some years ago in a mole-trap, in which the brown of the upper parts was replaced by a pale chestnut several shades lighter than the ordinary colour. A white weasel in olden times seems to have been regarded as an omen of evil. There is an old saying regarding the ill-fated Radcliffes, Earls of Derwentwater, that

"A white wesle, or a white klyket,  
Derwentwater never lykit,"

while another, of uncertain date, runs:

"Hunting, hawking, or paramours,  
A hundred failures to one good;  
A wise man them a' abjur's  
If a white wesle cross his rood."

But if good luck was to be looked for except when white weasels or white foxes appeared, the Derwentwaters ought to have had a good time of it, for one animal is almost as rare as the other, and the average man may easily spend a lifetime without seeing either. The white fox, or klyket, is not so easily explained away, but a white stoat would probably pass as a weasel in days when less attention was paid to nicety of distinction than obtains now, when you find the ordinary Board-school boy, fresh from his Nature studies, ready to assure you that "the one is weasily distinguished from the other, which is stoatally different."

In "The Denham Tracts" it is related of the New Hall at Nafferton in Northumberland, which is said to have been an occasional residence of the Radcliffes prior to their going to Dilston about 1678, that "apparitions were rampant when a child was to be born, or anyone was to die, or as preliminaries to any fatal accident; and they took the forms of a white weasel, a white hen, or a white rabbit, and sometimes of a person without the head dressed in white." And the association of the family again with the white weasel is interesting. Again it is of unlucky omen. It has likewise been considered unlucky to see a weasel run round a stone in a direction contrary to the sun:

"A man mun ride when he canna wressel,  
But if at starting he sees a wessel  
Gan weddershins around a stane,  
His horse'll sune be back its lane."

According to a Scotch rhyme, it would seem to bode no good to meet a weasel at any time:

"Gin yer gan te meet yer lassie,  
An' a wesel chance te pass ye,  
Ye'd better bide at hame that day;  
She'll be as soor as lapper'd whey."

The water-vole often falls a prey to the weasel, and I have three or four times seen encounters between a weasel and the common brown rat, always resulting in the death of the latter, though the rat was often quite as heavy as its plucky little assailant. So far as observed on such occasions, the rat was always acting solely upon the defensive, and invariably squealing, evidently overcome with a fear which numbed its powers of escape. Although there is no gainsaying the fact that the weasel is to some extent inimical to game, one cannot but regret the ruthless persecution which is slowly but surely exterminating it. When one sees the country overrun with rats and voles, which collectively do far more harm than a few weasels, the wish instinctively asserts itself that Nature could be left more alone to apply the remedy which she so evidently intended as a check upon the undue increase of the rodents. LICHEN GREY.

## WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

### TRAGEDIES OF THE GARDEN.

IF you have a liking for wild-beast fights, any corner of your garden where the common garden spider abounds will at this time of year afford you as thrilling a morning's entertainment as ever set the people of old yelling round an amphitheatre. The combatants, it is true, are not as large as lions and tigers; but they make up for all other shortcomings by their ferocity and by the whole-heartedness with which they throw themselves into the life-and-death struggles which they must be prepared to face at any moment of their precarious lives. No soldier of fortune ever lived more constantly in the presence of death than does the apparently somnolent garden spider crouching in the middle of its web among the peaceful lavender.

### THE SPIDER'S COURTSHIP.

If you see a spider evidently restless in her web, making queer little starts and jerks as if skirmishing with some invisible enemy, or, perhaps, breaking into occasional runs halfway from the centre of the web towards one point in the circumference, only to return from each short excursion to her post of vantage in the middle, the chances are fifty to one that, if you follow the silken strands up to where, in the direction which her quick sallies indicated, they disappear under the foliage, you will find the cause of the lady's nervousness—a male spider, all on the alert, fingering slowly with his long tapering front legs the threads which run direct to where the object of his affection is awaiting him. To her the approaching male is not a lover only; he is also the prospect of a large and succulent meal. No wonder, then, that she is nervously interested in his approach. And, however "unnatural" it may seem to us, it is a wise provision on the part of Nature

which converts the male spider, as soon as he has done what he can towards the perpetuation of the species, into food to strengthen the female. His existence is of no more importance; but that she should live and be strong is necessary indeed. Her meals at the best of times are irregular and fortuitous, and the nourishment with which he furnishes her may just tide her over a lean and hungry time, when flies are far between.

### THE CHANCE OF BEING EATEN.

Not that she always succeeds in eating him. Out of five successive males which I have seen permitted to come to close quarters with as many females, one escaped apparently unhurt, though his behaviour after he had thrown himself from the web to the ground suggested that he had been badly, though invisibly, bitten somewhere. Two others got away at the cost of leaving each a leg behind him; and in both cases the female proceeded to derive what consolation she could from lurching off the limb that remained. The other two (both being males that were distinctly smaller than their partners) failed altogether to get away, but were firmly held and feasted upon there and then. The odds, therefore, would seem to be about five to two in favour of the husband making good his retreat with, at least, his life; but any one of the three which escaped must, in his crippled condition, have fallen an easy prey to any other male of approximately his own size whom he might meet prowling about.

### THE FIGHTING MALES.

For, while they apparently never make any attempt to eat a female, as between themselves the males are always upon the war-path. If, when one is endeavouring to approach a female in a web, you drop another male into the same web close to him, the two will instantly clinch with a ferocity that is indescribably horrid to witness. If there be any marked disparity in size between them, after the first collision the weaker will do his best to wrench himself loose and escape by dropping from the web, in which he may or may not succeed. He certainly will not if the other has once got his legs fairly round him, for the pressure of these legs, especially the two long front ones, grows remorselessly stronger and stronger. By imperceptible gradations the two become more and more closely welded together, until, though you cannot tell exactly when the change occurs, what was a duel has become a cannibal banquet, and you become aware that the smaller of the two is no longer fighting or resisting, but is merely being crushed flaccid and helpless in the other's embrace, and already the life juices are passing from him to his conqueror.

### AND THE GENTLER SEX.

Now is the female's opportunity. She has been kept well informed by the twitching of the strands of what was in progress; and when the *mêlée* ceases, and the two, the feeder and the fed upon, lapse into quiescence, she begins to approach stealthily. But she is stealthy only until within perhaps half an inch of the scene of the combat; then with one lightning leap she throws herself upon the two. In an instant she is grappling the mass of both the slayer and the slain together to her, and her jaws are buried in the victor's body. He has been too busy with his meal, too blind with the lust of blood, to be able to make any defence against this sudden attack, and, just as the weaker one yielded and collapsed imperceptibly in his arms a minute or two ago, so now he gradually ceases to suck at his prey, his limbs, formerly so strenuous when they clutched the other in the death-grip, grow limp and inert, while she who was to have been his lady-love feasts impartially on him and his victim.

### "MORE LIONS!"

If you are not already sated with horrors, it is easy to turn more beasts into the arena. Another male dropped into the web will be permitted to crawl over and over the female without so much as causing her to interrupt her meal; nor, as has already been said, will he make any attempt to bite her. Only when her appetite is glutted will she, perhaps, be persuaded to turn from the half-eaten bodies to listen to his wooing—wooing which again will probably, at least in the odds of five to two, end in his also being added to herarder. But if, instead of a male, another female be dropped in, the case is different. The new-comer will attack her sister instantly, nor is there any pretence of indifference on the sister's part. The half-finished meal is immediately abandoned, and then, as when the males first met, the two will clinch, and it is only a question of which is the stronger. One or other will in her turn slowly succumb under the awful pressure of that close-locked embrace; one will remain mistress of the web, with stock of food enough to render her for some days independent of the casual fly and the accidental moth.

### SIGNS OF AUTUMN.

Signs of the end of summer are now too numerous to be ignored. For some days the swallows and martins have been collecting on the telegraph wires at the bend in the road, until last evening a rough count showed that there were about 900 in the assembly, and at the first favourable wind they will be gone. Here also, at a distance of some fifty miles from the East Coast, the whinchat has suddenly become a common bird along the hedges, where there has not been one to be seen since they passed this way in the spring. And the first of the new brood of Red Admiral butterflies have appeared in garden and orchard, or along hedges where late blackberry bushes are still in bloom. H. P. R.

## IN THE GARDEN.

### PREPARING FOR AUTUMN PLANTING.

THOUGH the garden is in its full autumn beauty, we must be mindful of the planting season which is rapidly approaching, and prepare forthwith by trenching the ground, if this is necessary, where the plants are to go. Success is practically assured when the planting is thoroughly done, and the plants given a good start. We have seen so many failures through a careless or no preparation of the soil that we cannot insist too strongly on the importance of a good foundation. It will be well to leave the soil exposed for a time to enable rains and sun to sweeten it, and give the roots every opportunity of running freely in the fresh material. This is a good time to plant bulbs, and orders should be given at once of the stock required. Daffodils, Hyacinths,

Tulips, Crocuses, Spanish Bluebells or Scillas, Chionodoxa or the "Glory of the Snow," Winter Aconites as a carpet under trees, Day Lilies for shady walks, and Lilies are some of the most important groups. Make a strong feature of the late-flowering or May Tulips, of which the most brilliant is the Gesner's (*Gesneriana spatulata*), a goblet of glowing crimson, which opens out to the sun and discloses an inky blue base, and there will be no regrets. We urged a friend to plant a bed of this Tulip, and no less than 350 bulbs were required to fill it, but so glorious was the effect that more beds will be planted with it this autumn. There are many other forms,



A SHELTERED CORNER.

*Macrospeila*, Cottage Maid, Picotee, Golden Crown, Fawn, Vulcan, and retroflexa, composing a very good selection. Vulcan belongs to the Darwin class, and is almost black in colour. A bed of it with a groundwork of dark blue Pansies is very unusual, but of rich effect. The garden requires close attention now to maintain its freshness. There is an atmosphere of decay, but the timely removal of dead and decaying flowers, frequent mowing of the grass, and the removal of dead stems, when these are unsightly, will preserve an almost summer-like beauty. This is the best season of the year to strike Roses from cuttings, which will root without any artificial heat. A bed of light soil should be made up in the open, and the cuttings taken from moderately-ripened wood. They should be about 6in. in length, and from the lower half remove every leaf. The base of the shoot must rest firmly on the soil. It is well to choose the cuttings from growths that carried the first flowers of summer. Only about 1in. of the cutting should be seen.

#### AN INTERESTING GARDEN.

The illustration shows a garden of much interest, or, rather, a corner of it. There are flowering trees and shrubs, conifers, and brave masses of Yuccas in bloom, but the most homely features are the plants in the rough, dry wall. Wall gardening has advanced greatly during the past few years, and given great joy to many an English home. Here it is possible to grow a hundred plants that are not usually seen in chink and cranny—the wild Pinks, Pansies, Carnations, and even the tall yellow Mulleins.

#### RANDOM NOTES.

*A Beautiful New Shrub.*—At a recent meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society Messrs. J. Veitch and Sons, Limited, of Chelsea, showed a beautiful shrub, *Buddleia variabilis magnifica*, which has been introduced from China by their traveller, Mr. E. H. Wilson. It is one of the most important additions to our hardy shrubs that have appeared for many years, and completely outshines *B. variabilis veitchiana*. The magnificent form has long, graceful spikes of quite purple flowers of an intensely dark shade, and they seem to hang from almost every shoot. The whole plant is very beautiful, and so free that it looks like a sea of purple colouring from a distance.

*An Autumn Rose Show.*—The second autumn show of the National Rose Society will take place in the Horticultural Hall, Vincent Square, on Tuesday, September 26th, when there will probably be a beautiful display of Tea, Hybrid Tea, and China Roses, which frequently show their warmest colourings late in the year. At the time of writing the Roses are resting, but with warm and gentle rain and sunshine the buds now appearing will soon develop, and another welcome display will fill the late days of September with colour and fragrance. We hope this show will be well supported by a strong competition, and a large attendance of the general public.

*Bold Grouping of Plants.*—The flower borders in the well-planted garden are approaching their full autumn beauty, and the wisdom of boldly grouping, where it has been practised, is even more apparent than in the earlier part of the year. We are now enjoying the grand pictures of rich colouring that are painted by careful groupings of Tritoma and scarlet Dahlias and Gladiolus, with the strong orange and deep yellows of Rudbeckia and Helianthus and African Marigolds, while the same range of rich, strong colouring is repeated at their foot by masses of yellow and orange and scarlet Nasturtium. When such grouping as this, carefully designed and carried out, plays its part for some third of the central length of a 200ft.

long border, whose breadth is 14ft., there is space to show the merit of the arrangement, and the value that masses of strong colour so managed can acquire, especially when the ends of the same border are treated in a corresponding way in large groupings of cool and pale colourings.

*Cool Colours.*—The cool-coloured ends of this border have a groundwork of quiet, low-toned bluish green, as of Yucca and Iris, of bright, glaucous blue-green, as of Crambe and Elymus, both invaluable for such use, and of grey and silvery tones in large masses, represented by Santolina and Cineraria maritima, with white and palest pink and pale yellow flowers only.

Groups of colour so arranged not only give the fullest strength value of which the flowers are capable, but they give it in a way that strikes the beholder with an impression of boldness tempered by refinement, whereas the same number of plants mixed up would only have conveyed a feeling of garish vulgarity, mingled with an uncomfortable sensation, as of an undisciplined, crowded jumble of coloured material.

## FROM THE FARMS.

#### THE DAIRY OUTLOOK.

THE annual report issued by Messrs. Weddell and Co. is more than usually interesting; but the item to which farmers will attach most importance is the forecast made for the coming year. They say: "It is difficult to gauge the increase in our imports of butter; but considering that the extraordinary growth in the imports is most unlikely to be continued in the same ratio during the coming year, and the uncertainty of the climate over such a length of country from north to south as is presented by the three States of Queensland, New South Wales,

and Victoria—viz., some 2,500 miles—it is a liberal view to expect an increase of 4,000 tons, which is nearly 18 per cent." From Canada they consider that the supplies are likely to be less, because during the last year the supplies, instead of going into cold storage, were practically consumed. The Continent of Europe will be expected to supply more, however, than it did in the past twelve months. No increase is expected from the United States or from the Argentine, and the reasons given are highly interesting, bearing as they do on economical principles that are affecting the butter supply. Argentina has now found that it has a better market in South Africa than in Great Britain, and so its supply has been diverted. The United States, on the other hand, finds that it has increased its number of home consumers, so that the dairy farmers are much less anxious to export than used to be the case. It is another illustration of the principle that the growth of population always tends to catch up, and goes beyond, the food supply. We see the same thing in butter as in cereals. In conclusion Messrs. Weddell and Co. say: "With the shortage in the home production, and with not a fourth of the normal amount of butter of all kinds in cold store, the prospects clearly point to a higher level of prices for the coming season. Probably an average of nearly 7s. 6d. per cwt. above last year will not be far from correct, and if any recurrence of a partial drought appears in Australia, or from some unforeseen cause supplies are reduced elsewhere to any appreciable extent, then the higher level of prices will certainly exceed 7s. 6d. per cwt."

#### CROPS IN SOUTHERN COUNTIES.

Although the farmer is something of a privileged grumbler, the farmer of the Southern Counties must be very hard to please indeed if he cannot find some gratitude in his heart this season. Generally speaking, the fortunes of agriculture have not gone amiss, but over a good deal of the country the hay crop has been rather deficient, so that in this one respect, at least, all has not been ideal. In the South, however, and especially in the South-East, we have nothing to complain of in this regard either. The South-Eastern Counties, which are the hop-growing counties, have special reason to be content, too, with that which is at once their most speculative and, when it is good, their most paying crop—the hops. We cannot ever remember to have seen them looking better, and this in spite of the fact that in quite the early days, when hard frost was followed by long drought, it hardly seemed possible that they could even be up to the normal mark. However, the later weather has been all that could be wished for them, even as in these South-Eastern Counties, which are usually so dry, the rain came more plentifully than in other parts of England so as to be the salvation of the local hay crops. The hops never looked brighter, cleaner, and more healthy. Of



course, not a great deal of wheat is grown in these Southern Counties; but a certain quantity is necessarily raised, chiefly for the straw's sake, and it is all good. The harvest weather has not been settled, but it has not been altogether evil. The fruit crops, which are important in the same counties, are very variable from part to part. Here the apples will be good and the cherries have been a failure; there the cherries were a great crop and there are no apples. In some orchards pears have been very plentiful; elsewhere there has been none. A good deal of this difference is probably caused by the unequal incidence of the severe frost, but also it is to be noted that where the apple trees bore very richly last year they are taking a rest this year, and vice versa, and that the case with the cherries is very similar.

PRELIMINARY AGRICULTURAL RETURNS.

In the preliminary statement issued from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in regard to the agricultural statistics for 1905 there are several interesting points. The land that has gone out of cultivation amounts to 30,778 acres, which is, of course, open to a considerable reduction on account of that which is annually taken for building purposes and the creation of grounds and gardens. The wheat area has increased over last year by 421,701 acres. The quantity of land devoted to oats, barley, peas, turnips, swedes, rape, and lucerne has in each case diminished, but there is nothing very remarkable in the change. The land devoted to small fruit and orchards has shown the customary increase.

## LORD HENRY BENTINCK'S WENSLEYDALES.



Copyright.

GRAZING ON A BANK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

IN a previous article we have said something about the shorthorns and other livestock on the Underley Farm, Kirkby Lonsdale, and to-day we show some illustrations of the very fine Wensleydale flock which finds such suitable pasturage there. It was founded in 1897, and it is unnecessary to speak of the success which has attended it since, because that is well known among all sheep-breeders. The choice of Wensleydales for the district was a happy one, as the breed is in considerable demand

for crossing with the hill sheep to produce good cross-bred lambs. As is well known, the Wensleydales are of Northern origin, as they are said to have sprung from the Teeswaters, a breed of sheep which, as the name implies, were produced chiefly in the valley of the Tees. Up to quite recent times they were known by the name of Teeswaters, and old-fashioned people in the district still call them that. No doubt Bakewell used them for building up his flock in conjunction with the old Leicester, the old Lincoln, and the



Copyright.

SHEARLING RAMS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Warwickshire. The name of Wensleydale long-wools was given at the time when the Yorkshire Agricultural Society began offering prizes for them. Professor Wrightson gives the following description of the breed: "The Wensleydale is a large, high-standing sheep, with a characteristic blue in the skin of the face and ears, which also sometimes extends to the whole of the body, though the shade is deeper on the face and shanks." A more detailed description will be found in the Flock Book. Following the example set on the home farm, the tenants in the neighbourhood have taken very kindly to keeping Wensleydales. They find the sheep profitable for a number of reasons. During recent years public taste has turned away from the very fat sheep that used to be in vogue, and what is wanted now is a lean meat with joints that are not too long. The hardiness and activity of the Wensleydale tend to develop these qualities. Of the wool, a Bradford expert has written: "When fineness of fibre is united with purity of lustre, you have a most valuable wool. To put the matter into a concise form, I give you my opinion below upon your pure Wensleydale wool. First, it is pure in lustre; second, it is the finest quality of pure lustre; third, it is silky in handle; fourth, it is quite long enough in staple; fifth, it is very even in quality throughout the fleece." In Scotland Wensleydales are employed to a large extent in crossing with black-faced mountain ewes, and rams of dark blue are preferred because they often produce lambs with dark faces, a point buyers think a great deal of. The produce of the black-face and the Wensleydale goes by the name of Mashams. Lord Henry Bentinck's flock was built up with great care and with the best blood available, and at the Royal Show he has taken nearly all the prizes possible. But in this, as in shorthorn breeding, he has aimed much more at the benefit of the tenants than at winning showyard honours. The use of the sires is allowed to the



Copyright.

EWES AND LAMBS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

farmers on very easy terms, and they have the power to purchase at the lowest rate any of the flock reared on the home farm. The consequence is that the quality of Wensleydale sheep has been much improved in this district, and the farmers have made discovery of a new and very considerable source of income.

Our illustrations show not only specimens of the breed, but give some idea of the character of the land where they are at pasture. The three shearling ewes are by Moores Blue, 890; Blue Hero, 854; and Blue Cap 2nd, 853. They were winners of second prize at the London Park Royal Show, 1904, and were first at the Royal Lancashire at Southport in the same year. During the present season they took third prize at the Royal Agricultural Show of England at Park Royal. The Wensleydale ewes and lambs are also of the very highest quality. The ewe with the ewe lamb is by Boy in Blue, and one of the first prize winners at Park Royal in the present year. The ewe with tup lamb was second at the same exhibition. The shearling Wensleydale ram was a first prize winner at the Royal in 1904, and carried off a similar honour in 1905.

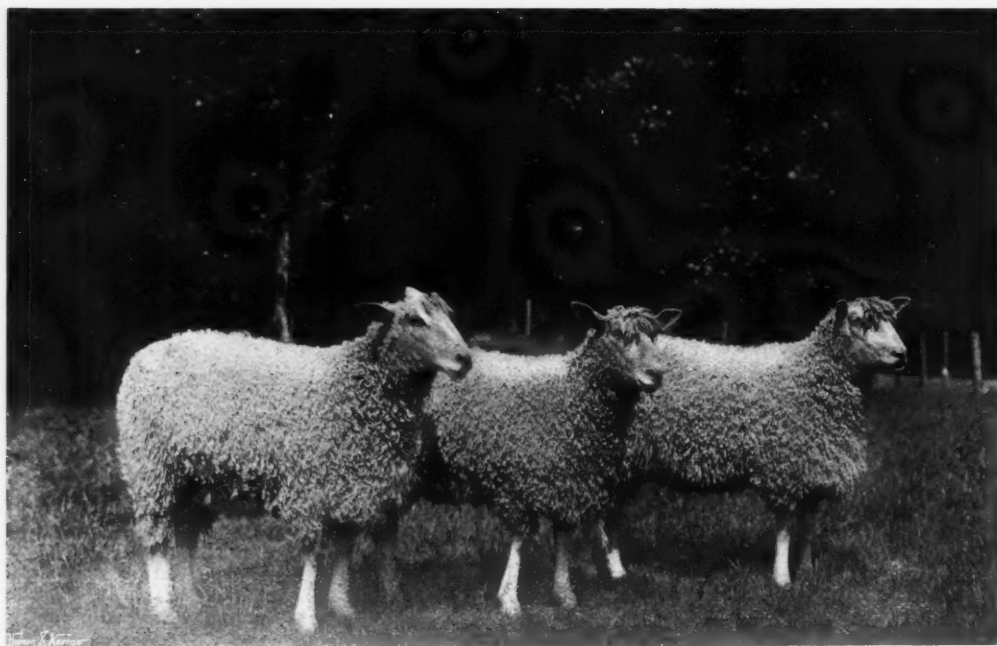
The practical question that farmers would no doubt ask is how far this breed of sheep is suitable to the ordinary conditions of agriculture, it being kept in view that the object of the flockmaster is twofold—one, the supply of a suitable kind of mutton to the butcher, and the other the production of a good fleece. For the former of these purposes we have already shown that the Wensleydale is well suited. In regard to mutton, a very great change has come over the taste of the consumer within present memory. Even the very poor, who did not eat much mutton in the olden time, can now obtain it as it comes frozen from Australia, and the consequence is that people



Copyright

A WELL-BRED GROUP.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright.

SHEARLING EWES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



have become much more fastidious than they used to be. Farmers find this to be especially the case in the disposal of old ewes, which they cannot always sell even to the Union, because of the imported mutton. Higher up in the social grade, the demand has increased for moderate-sized joints with a minimum of fat upon them. Hardy sheep like the Wensleydale answer these requirements more effectually than

those which are not accustomed to take so much exercise. Wool is not of the high importance that it used to be in England, chiefly for the reason that it is sent in so cheaply from abroad, and for many years there was a steady decline in price, which was only checked by the drought in Australia. Still, wool has not sunk into the position of being an insignificant factor in the farming account, since it is estimated that Yorkshire produces 12,000,000 lb., Lincolnshire over 10,500,000 lb., while Northumberland, Kent, Devon, and Sussex, though not approaching these huge totals, get well into seven figures. Northumberland, perhaps, has the largest sheep farms, but the weight of the fleeces is considerably less than that of the other counties. Yorkshire is not supplied so fully with sheep per acre, but the total is swollen by the immense size of the shire. In Lincolnshire the sheep closely approximate in character to the Wensleydale. The price, taking a decade or two, has been going down, except when a great drought abroad occurred, and there are many reasons why we cannot wonder at the fact. We do a great trade in exporting pedigree animals, but in return Argentina and some of our

colonies send us huge quantities of mutton, the fleeces of which they are able to sell at a price with which the native farmer finds it difficult to compete. Mr. Jonas Webb, than whom there is no better authority on the subject, says: "The animal required to carry a great weight of fleece must necessarily be of a heavier build, with strong limbs, good joints, and well-sprung ribs and a strong back; a

coarser head must necessarily often accompany the heavier body. A distinct wide lock of lustrous fibre should be visible in opening the fleece, not wool which grows like a fine carpet on the body like that of the Down." Mr. Webb's view, as that of a flock-master, may advantageously be compared with the opinion of manufacturers as set forth at the beginning of this article.

## A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

TWO very opposite views of Percy Bysshe Shelley have found currency; one is that embodied in Matthew Arnold's phrase, "The ineffectual angel," and the other the opinion that he is pre-eminently the poets' poet. The meaning attached to this may be either abstract or particular. It is certain that the majority of the poets since the time of Shelley have regarded him with special favour and approbation. "And did you once see Shelley plain?" asked Browning in a well-known poem; Tennyson had studied Shelley to purpose, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William



Copyright.

THREE TUP PRIZE-WINNERS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright.

TWO GENERATIONS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Morris, and the living C. A. Swinburne have united in their admiration, so that in that sense he is undoubtedly the poets' poet; but whether his is the poetry that would appeal most directly to the truly poetic mind is a question that admits of some doubt. The phrase of Arnold that we have already quoted points to a weakness which no argument can get over. Shelley, as it were, mounts to the very sky on the wings of his imagination, but we never can tell where the solid ground is from which he made his start. The greatest poets always carry the sympathetic reader with them, and their boldest flights of fancy do not seem unreasonable, because they carry the reader with them step by step. It is so, at any rate, with Shakespeare and with Homer, who were the greatest of all poets. But Shelley very often appears to be simply beating the air. No one who has any sympathy at all with poetry will deny the exquisite beauty alike of his thought and diction. It lies on the surface for all to see and admire, and yet it is perfectly certain that Shelley is not known and loved as other poets are, though some of his pieces are included in every popular anthology. A few of his minor pieces have become a part of the popular heritage, but the number is inconsiderable. We take the little poem called "Good-Night" as an example:

"Good-night? ah! no; the hour is ill  
Which severs those it should unite;  
Let us remain together still,  
Then it will be good night.  
  
How can I call the lone night good,  
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?  
Be it not said, thought, understood—  
Then it will be—good night.  
  
To hearts which near each other move  
From evening close to morning light,  
The night is good; because, my love,  
They never say good-night."

The note prefixed to it in the new *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Thomas Hutchinson (Henry Frowde) is a good example of the work done by the present editor. He tells us in the first instance it was published by Leigh Hunt over the pseudonym, "The Literary Pocket-Book, 1822." It is included in the Marvard MS. book, and there is a transcript by Shelley in "The Literary Pocket-Book, 1819," presented by him to Miss Sophia Stacey, December 29th, 1820. The text used is that of the *editio princeps*, 1822. The variants of the Stacey MS., 1820, are also given in the footnotes.

We do not know that all this leads to a much greater appreciation of Shelley's poem than it would have received if simply set down as the author left it. Indeed, the book is published with a flourish: "Including material never before printed in any edition of the poems." This material, it may be said at once, is mostly editorial. There is nothing of importance to add to Shelley's poems themselves, and, perhaps, it is right that once and for all an editor should attempt to procure as accurate a text as is possible. Every day that passes makes it more difficult to do this, and the poet who is worth keeping at all is worth the honour of an accurate and sound text. But for the rest, we somewhat doubt the virtue of a complete edition. There is no poet of standing in modern times who is not somewhat too verbose in his utterances, and the really vital verse from any one volume could be put into extremely little space. One does not like to push this doctrine too far, for the simple reason that there are vandals ready to seize upon any excuse for tampering with the text of their authors. At the same time, there is, to speak plainly, a great deal of dead matter in the works of Shelley, and the editor would deserve well of his country who cut this ruthlessly away, until there only remained the few perfect gems of poetry which Shelley bequeathed to his successors. It is needless to say that there is much in this book which, though we quite understand its inclusion from the motive just referred to, is in itself utterly lifeless, and is neither read nor quoted by any human being. The ideal editor, therefore, would do far better in taking a pride in cutting out those bits that reflect no credit on the author, than in turning out every old scrap-book and drawer. In a general way the poet knows thoroughly well what he would like to publish, and sees that in print before he dies, while those who are left behind can find nothing which has not already been rejected by him. This was true in an extraordinary degree of the late Lord Tennyson, in whose posthumous work there has not been found a single immortal line, and it seems to be equally true of Shelley. The additions only swell the bulk of his poems without adding to their value.

To return, however, to the intrinsic merit of the poetry, no doubt this is much more apparent to those who are poets themselves than to the lay reader. The artist in any craft has a natural admiration for aptitude in the use of the tools and material at his disposal. Poets love Shelley because, above all else, he was a singer, a master of the purest melody that the world has ever known—melody that not even Swinburne in his

most inspired moments has ever been able to equal. This may not be a merit in the eyes of the general reader, whose attention is usually directed to finding out the substance of what a writer has to say regardless of the dress in which it is clothed. But those who have practised the art of poetry must inevitably feel the magic of style, and, indeed, style at its best is in itself an expression of that finest poetic feeling which escapes the meshes made by words. If we take lines like the following we shall see a certain wizardry in Shelley's verse which seems to excite everyone, independently of the sense, or to convey those subtler shades of meaning which syllables in themselves are powerless to capture:

"Arethusa arose  
From her couch of snows  
In the Acroceraunian mountains,  
From cloud and from crag,  
With many a jag,  
Shepherding her bright fountains.  
She leapt down the rocks,  
With her rainbow locks  
Streaming among the streams;  
Her steps paved with green  
The downward ravine  
Which slopes to the western gleams.  
And gliding and springing  
She went, ever singing,  
In murmurs as soft as sleep;  
The Earth seemed to love her,  
And Heaven smiled above her,  
As she lingered towards the deep.  
  
Then Alpheus bold,  
On his glacier cold,  
With his trident the mountains strook;  
Ard opened a chasm  
In the rocks—with a spasm  
All Erymanthus shook.  
And the black south wind  
It unsealed behind  
The urns of the silent snow,  
And earthquake and thunder  
Did rend in sunder  
The bars of the springs below.  
And the beard and the hair  
Of the River-god were  
Seen through the torrent's sweep,  
As he followed the light  
Of the fleet nymph's flight  
To the brink of the Dorian deep."

And even in those pieces which have most commended themselves to the public there is the most magical use of words which charms us everywhere in Shelley, because he seems able to fuse all his materials into the same liquid gold of song. As witness the following:

"And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,  
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,  
Prickly, and pulpos, and blistering, and blue,  
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.  
  
And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould  
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;  
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead  
With a spirit of growth had been animated!  
  
Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,  
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,  
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes  
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes."

We suppose the most popular of all his poems is "To a Skylark," and in this case he would be a bold critic who averred that the public judgment had gone wrong. There is energy and there is music and there is divine harmony in this beautiful poem:

"We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.  
  
Yet if we could scorn  
Hate, and pride, and fear;  
If we were things born  
Not to shed a tear,  
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.  
  
Better than all measures  
Of delightful sound,  
Better than all treasures  
That in books are found,  
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!  
  
Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know,  
Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow,  
The world should listen then—as I am listening now."



## CORRESPONDENCE.

## A CURIOUS GROWTH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose an interesting photograph, which may be suitable for your paper. It represents a remarkable section of a wych elm pollard, grown at Winterbourne Earls, near Salisbury. The tree had evidently been injured, and the new growth, instead of joining, took a turn inwards, and continued to grow in this shape.—E. A. R.

## A KENT COTTAGE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was greatly interested by seeing in your issue of August 12th an illustrated article upon "A Kent Cottage," and a letter on the particular house illustrated from Mr. Robert Weir Schultz in your last issue. I do not know the author of the article, which I happened by a coincidence to see when I was visiting the little house itself to arrange about its reparation; but the writer, in spite of some slight inaccuracies, has given a most interesting presentment of the house as restored—more or less—to its original state. Indeed, the article confirmed in all important respects the conclusions I had myself come to in a report to my client upon the proposed repair. Your readers may be interested to know that at my second visit, when opportunity was given for search, several most valuable details of the ancient house were brought to light, including the original arched entrance door-head, when the modern square casing was removed, and several blocked windows. Among the latter are twin three-light arch-headed openings that originally lit the great open hall, similar to those remaining—but incorrectly drawn in the pen-sketch—on the left hand of the ground floor front. These are of three lights, not two, as in the sketch, in each of the divisions; and probably there were others of this interesting early type in the house, besides these in the ground storey room and the hall. Perhaps, later, I may be able to send you sketches or photographs of the recovered features. Let me say, in reply to Mr. Schultz, that I deprecate "restoration," which involves the obliteration of interesting later work, as earnestly as he does; and that in this particular case no such "ideal restoration" as that sketched out in your letter is going to be attempted. On the other hand, though the central hall will not be opened to the roof, many other original features of the design, in matters of detail, will be brought out, and such slight restoration as may be required to this end will be frankly done. It is, I think, absurd to say that one may never repair or replace an old feature with the same material and in the same style as the original.—PHILIP M. JOHNSTON.

## HYBRID EGGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A correspondent asked recently for information on this subject, and I here give a brief account of what is known with regard to it: A number of years ago I had the opportunity of looking over the large collection of eggs belonging to Mr. W. Mark Pybus, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and I was particularly struck with a clutch of nine, the result of a cross between a black grouse and a black Spanish hen, obtained from Sutherland in 1886. The note I made with regard to these eggs at the time was: "The eggs have the shape and the texture of the ordinary eggs of the Spanish hen, but the markings are more or less those of the black grouse. The ground tint is nearly uniform yellow, varying slightly in intensity in different eggs; three are slightly, and six very distinctly, marked in addition like the eggs of the black grouse. Here, then, the result of a cross is expressed in the shell, with the varying of which we should imagine the male to have little or nothing to do, the shell being the product of the oviduct." Similar instances of the influence of crosses upon the colour of the eggs of birds were given by Gadow in his contribution on birds to "Bronn's Thierreich," and also by Nathusius in the "Journal f. Ornithologie" for 1874. At the time when the above excellent case came under my notice, my late lamented friend, Mr. G. P. Bulman, and I were deeply interested in such questions relating to heredity as teleony, and we desired to put what appeared to us to have an important bearing on that much-disputed phenomenon to the test of experiment. A colleague of mine at the Armstrong College in Newcastle agreed to have experiments



made at his house with finch-canary crosses. In one case a canary hen was mated with a greenfinch, and four eggs were produced. The first laid was scarcely to be distinguished from the egg of a greenfinch, the second and the third were more like, and the fourth altogether like, the eggs of the canary. The four eggs proved to be unfertilised. In another case a canary was mated with a bullfinch, and the change in the colour of the eggs was found to be even more pronounced. In this latter instance the canary was subsequently mated with a canary, and the eggs, coloured like those of the canary, were fertilised. The young birds, which were hatched, were neglected during my friend's absence, and died soon after his return. It is worth recording, however, that they were taken to a fancier who did not know anything about the history of the birds, and he exclaimed when he saw them, "These canaries! they are more like bullfinches!" At the same time an experiment was carried on in one of the gardens of the college by Mr. Bulman, and the result was published in *Nature*, Vol. LXIV., page 207 (1901). Minorca hens and a Cochon China cock were employed. Several of the eggs laid were found to be somewhat brown tinted, more especially when viewed side by side with the ordinary white eggs of the Minorca. It may, therefore, be said that cases have been recorded which prove that the crossing of birds affects the colour of the eggs, and that whether fertilisation has been effected or not. Nathusius stated that not only the colour but the microscopic structure of the shell was influenced. The terms "hybrid egg" and "hybrid oology," the latter used by Mr. Bulman (*Natural Science*, Vol. XIV., page 394), and changed afterwards in the paper in *Nature* cited above to "hybrid oochromy," are all objectionable, for it is more than probable that the spermatozoon has nothing whatever to do with the phenomenon. It is scarcely necessary for me to state that the albumen, the shell membranes, and the shell, with its colouring matter, owe their origin to the oviduct, and we have, therefore, to deal with an influence upon an accessory part of the reproductive apparatus. It is not on the same lines with what has been with more reason called "hybrid endosperm" in the case of plant crosses. In the higher plants there is a sort of double fertilisation, one of the nuclei of the pollen grain fuses with the egg-cell or oosphere and produces the embryo plant, and the other with a nucleus which has a similar origin to the oosphere, and from this second fusion the endosperm arises. The effect of the cross may affect the colour of the eggs for some time after the cross has taken place. Not only the immediate eggs, but the successive ones, are altered, and only gradually regain the normal appearance of the hen's eggs. The "hybrid egg," it may be suggested, therefore, is produced by an enzymotic or chemical action upon the glands of the oviduct.—ALEXANDER MEEK.

## ANOTHER PARK FOR LONDON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Preliminary negotiations are being made by the County Council with a view to acquiring several acres of land at Norwood for a park. The land is the last bit of real rural country in the borough of Lambeth, and contains several picturesque thatched cottages. A suggestion has been made that the place should be maintained as a rural pleasure farm. The South London Borough Councils are being asked to support the scheme.—J. C.

## INCREASE OF GOLDFINCHES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Goldfinches have undoubtedly increased in numbers in this neighbourhood during the last few years. At one time they had become very scarce, but now they are by no means uncommon, and one sees them in flocks in the autumn and winter. They lose much of their shyness during the breeding season. Last year a pair built a nest in a small bay tree on our lawn, about 12 yds. from the corner of the house. From a short distance I was able to watch the building operations, which were undertaken entirely by one bird



(probably the female); but her mate never failed to accompany her in all her expeditions, and while she wove the material into the nest, he always mounted guard on a tree close by. Until the hen goldfinch commenced to lay, I do not think I ever saw the birds apart for one moment. The tiny nest (composed externally of silver grey lichens) was so cunningly concealed that it was some time before I could discover it, even after I had seen the bird repeatedly entering the bay tree at a particular spot.—IDA NORMAN, Beaminster, Dorset.

#### WILD BIRDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Last week I was pained to see several boxes of wild live birds at Portsmouth Station *en route* for Manchester. As it was then 3 p.m., the birds would not arrive till after dark. I was told that many would die on the way. Looking through the chinks I could see larks, goldfinches, linnets, and thrushes, but there were several other sorts besides. The cruelty of this trade is atrocious; but I am amazed that on other grounds the Hampshire people do not strive to put it down. How can they allow their birds to be thus killed off wholesale, or packed off to supply people who live in the North, which, apparently, is already denuded of birds? The attractions of foreign travel are great, and if our counties are stripped of birds, and left silent, dull, and dreary, who will care to visit them?—E. C. L. CHIE.

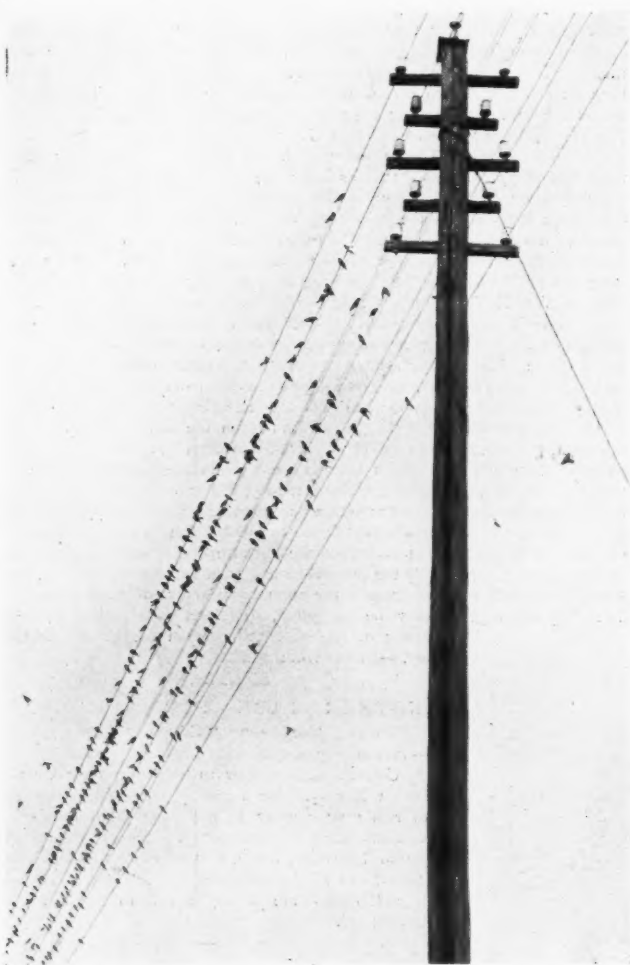
#### EAGLES THROWING YOUNG FROM NEST.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have read with much interest the letter in your issue of August 19th *re* golden eagles throwing their young out of the eyrie. I have often thought it rather odd that both eaglets should be so seldom reared, and in one case I visited an eyrie which had contained two young eagles a short time previously, but when I saw it there was only one bird, so it is quite possible that one eaglet is sometimes thrown from the eyrie. I cannot say that I have noticed that one of the eggs is usually smaller than the other.—SETON P. GORDON.

#### A HINT OF AUTUMN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]



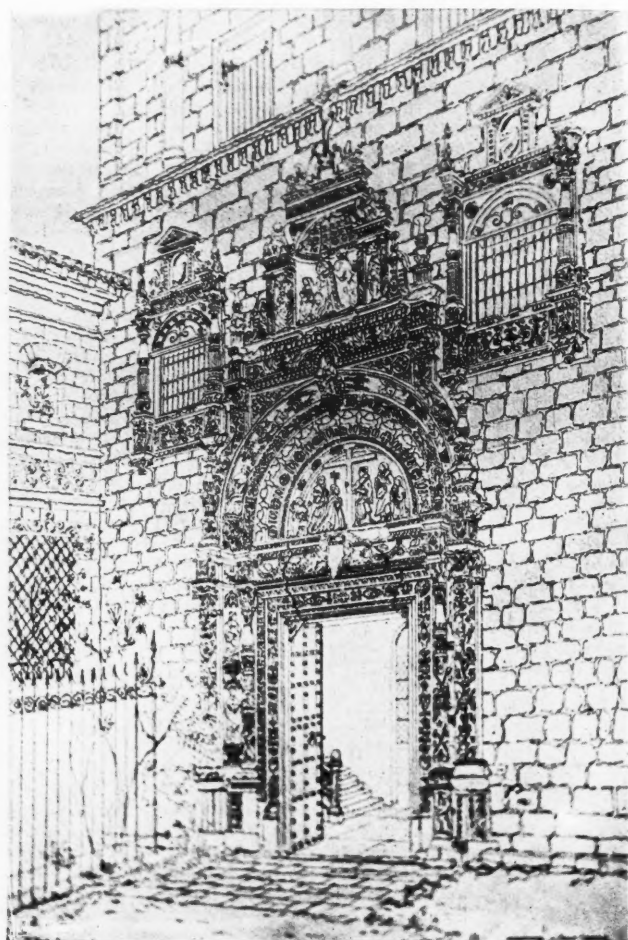
SIR,—When swallows begin to line the telegraph wires along the railways, it is a sure sign that the summer is drawing to a close. They gather in thousands to practise for that long and arduous journey that lies between them and their winter home. Besides the dangers of the weather—adverse winds, baffling fogs—the nets of French snarers have to be avoided as they pitch on the Brittany cliffs, if their beautiful pinions are not to be used to adorn (!) the hats of thoughtless women. They do well to practise. And it was no wonder that from all quarters of England this summer regret was expressed that the numbers of this attractive bird seemed to be decreasing. They are so essentially our companions while they stay with us, building on our homes, feeding over our lawns and fields, that their absence is noted at once. Telegraph-wires have ere now taken heavy toll of passing birds,

especially partridges and grouse, but never of the swallow. His perfect command of flight enables him, like a practical skater, to approach any obstacle at full speed, and at the last moment to dive, wheel, or mount, just sufficiently to clear it.—B. V.

#### A TOLEDO DOORWAY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—This sketch by Mr. Whitaker Watson, R.B.A., depicts a doorway of the Hospital of the Holy Cross in Toledo, that city once called "the crown



of Spain, the light of the whole world," and whose history reads like one long romance. There is a distinctly Moorish character about the square doorway, while above the richness of the Gothic ornament, influenced by the art of the Renaissance, confirms the account given of the founding—that this hospital was founded at the beginning of the sixteenth century by the famous cardinal Pedro Mandoza, whose figure can be seen above the doorway, together with St. Helena's, in a kneeling position, in the representation of the Invention of the Cross.—B. L.

#### GNAT-COLUMNS OVER TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—On Thursday, July 27th, I saw a very curious sight. Probably many of your readers have seen such things, but I have not. About a hundred yards lower down the river than my house, and just opposite the London extremity of Chiswick Eyot, are six tall poplar trees, of the upright variety, about 60ft. high. They stand in two rows of three, at right angles to the bank of the river. Looking at them at midday, I saw rising above them what seemed thin, vertical columns of light grey smoke. Sometimes they rose, sometimes they fell, sometimes they collapsed into a round cloud, sometimes, when a gust of wind blew, they disappeared, but were soon visible again, and always vertical, *i.e.*, in the same line as the tree stems. The smoke from a neighbouring chimney drifted northwards; but this never altered its direction. Guessing what it might possibly be, I took the glasses and went down to look. It was caused by immense swarms of gnats dancing over each tree. Above the two trees nearest to the road the swarms were divided into four separate pillars over each. The tree nearest the river had only one column, and smaller columns danced over the tops of the other three trees. They were in incessant motion, and often all four columns coalesced; but for the most part they kept separate, twisting with great velocity. At their highest ascent the winged whirlwind of gnats rose to 15ft. above the tops of the poplars. The thickness of the columns may be judged from the fact that they were visible at a distance of 100yds. I once saw a single globular swarm keep its place over an old elm tree for a whole evening, but never anything on this scale before. Another odd thing was that they were only over the tops of these trees. Not a gnat was visible below, none was in the house near, and none dancing over the river. On the other hand, it was an exceptional day for other insect life. A batch of Holly Blue butterflies, the larvæ of which feed on some holly bushes near, made the front quite gay, and numbers of white butterflies were also flying by the river banks.—C. J. CORNISH